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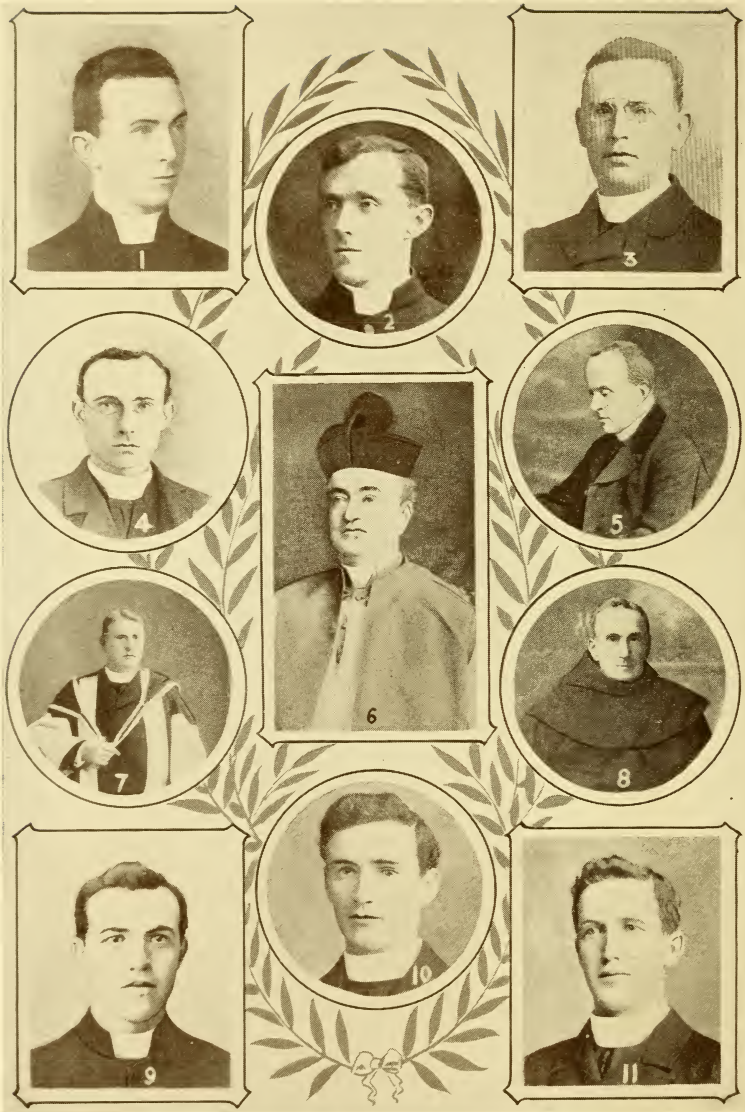

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7. Very Rev. Canon D'Alton. 8. Rev. P. F. Kavanagh. 9. Rev. Brian O Criochain.
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The Will and the Way

BY

IRISH PRIESTS

"O Irish priests ! how proud and high a heritage is yours !
A priceless love that will not die as long as time endures.
A precious flower of matchless bloom, whose perfume day by day
Will sweeten every toil and cross that meet you on your way."

—*Very Rev. P. M. Canon Furlong.*

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CATHOLIC LITERATURE

WHY do bad and dangerous publications find a wide circulation in Ireland? Is there nothing sound and Catholic to take their place? Have we not writers in abundance? Are they not able to turn out work which in every way will excel that of the English scribblers?

The writers answer that it does not pay to write for the Catholic public. Catholics will not pay up even when good value is offered and they can well afford to pay. They prefer what is non-Catholic. Writers who want to live by the pen must fall in with the fads and fashions of the hour. Catholic writers will not be supported by Catholic readers on their own merits: they must make a name among the strangers before they will get their deserts from their own. And they must hide, modify, whittle down their most sacred principles in order to appeal to the outsider and the enemy: otherwise they give offence, and their writings won't sell.

At times readers and writers are in the same difficulty. They have to struggle against a strong current. They are in an atmosphere that is poisonous to Catholicity: in countless unnoticed ways they inhale that atmosphere. That atmosphere is the atmosphere of Protestantism—of English civilisation in the English language. Converts of ability, from Newman onward, have testified to this fact. In one way it is worse than old Paganism, for modern civilisation is apostate—it has known the truth, and bartered it for a lie. And England is the great apostate of Europe. Elsewhere

the truth may get a hearing. England boycotts it more effectively than any index of prohibited books could do. To the average John Bull a Catholic book is an evil thing to be destroyed or put out of sight or ignored. Yet it is from John Bull that we Irish Catholics learn how to speak and to think. Insensibly we learn his dislike for the pure lineaments of eternal truth, for the serene unearthly beauty of Christian virtue. His influence directly and indirectly destroys all manly patriotism; though it may indeed leave a mawkish sentimentality which dreams of Erin as a weeping female who appeals to the mythical chivalry of the British animal. An Irish Catholic whom John Bull has fully tamed dislikes Ireland and Irish manliness even more virulently than does John Bull himself. As a writer, he cannot touch Ireland without offending every decent Irishman. As a reader, he cannot stand the exhibition of decent manhood. As a Catholic, he is in a perilous condition, for in the genuine Irish Catholic, religion and patriotism are inextricably intertwined.

This English spirit has also paralysed our power to write, while it has killed the desire to read. Though we can all read, we are not a reading people. In Gaelic times we were fond of books, even though books and schools were scarce. Every peasant's home had its library of laboriously copied manuscripts. The artificial foreignism crushed this refining and civilising instinct for literature. The lesson is obvious.

Thus we have in a large measure to create the taste for reading, and we have to direct it into a proper channel. The Gaelic League and the Catholic Truth Society are doing good work in both directions. Meanwhile, we need that great modern agency known as advertisement. We must know familiarly what are our resources. We must push and boom our books

with the untiring persistency that makes fortunes out of rubbish. All the devices of the pushful trader and the more pushful quack must be used to bring our books before the public. Everybody must be made to know that they are there. Daily we see that advertisement actually creates an appetite for the goods advertised. So it may be with Catholic literature. Look at the tremendous energy of those who sell worthless or evil books and papers.

Newspapers must employ a competent and vigilant literary staff. Publishers must wake up. They must see to it that they have agents in all the towns, and that these agents have a constant supply of fresh attractive Catholic publications, and keep them well in evidence. Placard and poster must be used for all they are worth. If Ireland were true to herself, the appearance of a new book of high quality would be infinitely more interesting news than the results of racing or football matches, or divorce cases or Crippen trials. Advertisement is the enemy's weapon. Let it be used in the cause of truth. Some of our publishers seem to think that we are in a normal condition as regards the book trade; they seem to imagine that their books will travel automatically from their shelves, whereas what we want is a man to bring the books down to every door in the land, and bring away the price of them. As a matter of fact, a foreigner would imagine that we are a race of savages whom an English Catholic Mission has converted to the Faith: we are not as yet sufficiently civilised to appreciate the value of the printed page. And yet the awe with which we look up at a book as something great and mysterious and far above us, though it is largely the result of enforced ignorance, is also partly a relic of the old Irish intelligent reverence

for literature. The Gaelic League is rousing and enlightening that instinct once more, according as it restores our hold upon the past. Let us imitate the enemy by pushing and booming the means of enlightenment as largely as he advertises his noxious wares. We must have commonsense and get over our silly squeamishness. We must realise that literature is marketable goods, and so must fight for its place in the market. Thus we shall bring our Catholic writers and readers face to face : the former will supply what the latter demand and pay for ; the latter in turn will be educated up to a taste for what is healthy. It is one of the main problems of the day—the full and energetic and unresting advertisement of Catholic Literature.

PAROCHIAL LIBRARIES

TO the reading of good books, humanly speaking, the Church owes two of her greatest champions, St. Ignatius and St. Augustine; while a treatise of bad philosophy, smuggled in by his sister to St. Sulpice, transformed the seminarist Ernest Renan into the ablest and most untiring protagonist of infidelity the nineteenth century knew. In this matter let us see how we stand?

We are living in a period of transition. In a few years old landmarks shall have disappeared and we shall find ourselves in a new Ireland. The security of our past lay in our insular position and our Gaelic tongue. Both have almost disappeared. We have adopted the language of the stranger; while the steamship, the fast express and the telegraph wires have practically annihilated distance. We are brought into touch with all that is evil outside our shores. Ireland is now standing face to face with a corrupt civilisation; its foul breath is upon her. A deadly freight of foreign literature is daily discharged upon her shores. The net-work of telegraph wires is throbbing with dangerous thought. "Thick as leaves in Vallombrosa," immoral picture cards are falling into the hands of youth to blast the whiteness of their virtue. The scoffer and the Socialist are now enabled to reach every corner of the land. Thousands of young Irish heads are bent to-day over a New York scandal, society revolting in its undisguised infamy. Thousands of hot young Irish brains are sucking in the moral turpitude that oozes from the London divorce courts.

We are a poor nation; our people are flying in thousands to look for bread in other lands; yet we yearly pour into the hands of British publishers half a million of money. How many of our honest Irish homesteads would not these five hundred thousand sovereigns keep standing! What do we get in exchange? A literature—if you dignify it by that name—that it would be well worth our while to pay as much more if we could sink every page of it to the bottom of the sea.

Does our crime end here? No; for since most of our cash goes for imported thought, the writers of genius at home are filled with despair.

To the men and women who could give us a literature racy of the soil and perfumed with its faith, we leave only two roads open—one leading to the poorhouse and the other to the emigrant ship.

Let this go on, let the nation's intellect continue to rot, and corruption of the nation's heart must inevitably follow. What use, then, will Ireland of the future have for her splendid churches and religious houses? Church-building in this country is one of the marvels of history. Poor Ireland had scarcely cast aside her penal rags and shaken off her fetters till she sprang, with all the hopeful vigour of a young giant, to the task of replacing the temples torn from her by the spoiler. For a hundred years she has been minting her sweat into gold, and the stream of tributary treasure from her scattered children kept pouring in. Even before the people began to struggle for security in the soil, or to build decent houses for themselves, they rushed to raise houses to God that would be worthy of their love.

When we erected the temples of stone our work was but half complete, and will even be in vain if in

the living temples of the human mind the pillars of intellectual conviction are permitted to corrode, and hearts that should be sanctuaries perfumed by the incense of prayer are converted into cesspools.

Let the sensuous and infidel press of England continue unchecked its destructive activities on Irish youth, and it will not be difficult to answer the question—How many generations will want our churches? How long will it be till the diseased intellects and fouled hearts begin to loathe the white marble and polished cedar of our temples and turn to the more congenial atmosphere of the infidel or Socialist club?

To the man who keeps an open eye on the dangers of the future it is evident that the first duty a father owes this family is to drive from the door, as he would a plague, that tainted garbage that is daily discharged upon our shores, and to feed the opening intellects of his children with thoughts that are pure and wholesome.

The priest's service of his Master must vary with the needs of every age. At one time he poured out martyr blood, at another he sang the praises of God in the carved stall of the stately cathedral; but to anyone who watches the hydra-headed monster—the English press—eating into the very vitals of national thought, it is perfectly clear that the service most needed in our time and country is the erection of parochial libraries.

The outlook threatens angrily. We see the Church in two historic Catholic nations smitten to the ground by triumphant blasphemy. The Grand Orient is now insolent with victory. Let us look to our defences, and look carefully; they may yet be tried in the whirlwind of flame.

When a library, a centre of pure diffusive light, is

established in every parish, when the present inflow of poisoned thought is fought, *a l'outrance,* when the young minds of our land are fed on the untainted productions of our writers whose minds are illumined by faith, and whose hearts are nourished with the sacraments, then, and then only, can we trust the old fortress to brave in safety the fiercest storms that the future has in store.

IRISH HISTORICAL STUDIES

Value of Local Irish Histories

As the beautiful language of our country is being once more heard in our schools, colleges and universities, it is interesting to note how Irish historical studies are emerging into public light and appreciation. Only a few years ago the name of Ireland had scarcely a place in the pages of our school books. Her saints and scholars were ignored, and Irish youths were to know nothing of the bravest of Ireland's children, nor of the objects for which they nobly struggled. Her Art and Literature might attract the admiration of foreigners; but these were treasures of which Irishmen should know nothing. Such, at least, was the aim of the Board of Primary Education in this country. Nor can we forget that the so-called National Board was not the only Irish Board which put forth its influence and resources to rob us of knowledge of this marvellous history of our land. The various official bodies who represent our alien Government in Dublin laboured in their way to effect the same object. But the events of our time prove the failure of this official conspiracy. Their efforts have only succeeded in covering them with the merited scorn of Irishmen and of European scholars.

But our buried treasures are well-nigh inexhaustible. The grand results already achieved only encourage us to dwell with interest on the vast field which yet invites the labours of the Irish historian. Though the pictures already given us of the history of Ireland are

drawn, in most cases, by master hands, yet the subject is only gaining in attraction. Outline and perspective may be improved, new figures introduced, and with new touches of light and shade a truer proportion may be secured for the more important events. And in such a picture may we not say that no part of Ireland's history need be neglected. The information procurable through local histories for those purposes is almost limitless.

Who can read the valuable notes with which O'Donovan has enriched his edition of the Irish annals without realising this? Let the readers of Dr. Healy's "Life of St. Patrick" ask themselves how much of the charm of that work is owing to the marvellous topographical knowledge of Ireland possessed by its highly gifted author? They will also, from those facts, see how far this feature goes to support in our day the historical value of one of the oldest treasures of the Irish Church —the venerable "Book of Armagh." None were more impressed with the accuracy of those views than were our ancestors. They had their local historians who recorded the memorable events of each district, and transmitted them to posterity through their chronicles. Fortunately, we are the possessors of some such works, and are, therefore, in a position to estimate their value. What Irish scholar would ignore the value of the Books of Hy Fiachrach and Hy Many, which speak to us in the twentieth century of the marvellous scholarship of Mac Firbis of Lecan? The learned author of "Ogygia" did not consider a detailed account of Connemara unworthy of his pen. And when, in our day, we turn away in disappointment—perhaps in disgust—from some of the flippant writers of our time who have exploited the Islands of Aran for a paying sale in the English market, we turn to O'Flaherty's

"Iar-Chonnacht" and gladly study his picture in which we truly recognise St. Enda's land, "the Sun of all the West." These priceless relics of the past have not as yet attracted the amount of attention and appreciation they deserve, yet we have many writers of our time who have fortunately devoted themselves to the same line of study, and by their unselfish labours have done much to cast a vast amount of additional light on the history of particular districts, counties and dioceses. What Dean Cogan did for Meath, Dr. Comerford did for Kildare; Down and Connor, and Sligo, and Clonmacnoise have had their historians. Time will continue to show the extent of our indebtedness to Maurice Lenihan for his beautiful and valuable history. Nor can our country forget what she owes to the gifted priests who have given us the fruits of their labour and learning in the histories of Limerick and Kilkenny. And as regards Clare, we are equally fortunate. The "Memoir of the O'Briens," published in 1860 by John O'Donohoe, is a splendid work, and has been followed by the late Dean White in his graphic history of the Dalcassians. Nor has the erudition of both of those works detracted in the least from the interest and value of the "History of Clare," which we have from the pen of the late learned and painstaking James Frost, M.R.I.A. And yet even those large and learned volumes have not exhausted either the subject or its interest. Those who follow the labours of our Irish antiquarians will not withhold the tribute of their admiration and thanks from Thomas J. Westropp, M.A., for his admirable sketches of the forts and cahirs of that county, especially of the Burren district, and we are satisfied that rare literary attainments only could invest those forgotten monuments with an interest that can recommend them to the public of our day.

So far from exhausting the history of Clare, those scholarly works leave its ecclesiastical history practically untouched. The ecclesiastical monuments of that county are numerous and very interesting. They speak to us with a fascinating eloquence of a civilisation and Christian piety that once shed its light through Europe, of the Arts of Ireland in a remote past, which have not been equalled in our boasted twentieth century, of piety, genuine and self-sacrificing, that tells of men who, in holiness and learning, are still the admiration of the holiest of our day. From Scattery to Holy Island, from Quin to Corcomroe, voices, audible to many, come forth, telling us that centuries have not obscured the sanctity of St. Caimin and St. Senanus, and St. Machreehee and St. Flannan, telling us how peace came to our warrior chieftains through "the victory of penance," and how they secured happiness in the cloister and the choir. Such appeals must be heard. And when those local studies are exhausted, and the literary treasures they reveal are given to the world, then and then only shall we be in a position to estimate the due proportion of the general and leading events of Irish history.

HOW TO BRIGHTEN RURAL LIFE IN IRELAND

IN spite of the rapid strides made by the Gaelic League during the past decade in changing the current of thought and feeling in Ireland, and in instilling new life into the rising generation, those whose life and work are cast in country districts must realise what a vast amount of work is still to be done before the boys and girls of these remote places are roused out of the lethargy and indifference in which they are buried, and the spark of national pride and enthusiasm is kindled in their breasts. It is, indeed, deplorable to see the utter lack of interest displayed by our young people in things vital to national life, and the commonplace things in which their interest lies. It may be urged against this that their lives are at least pure and simple, and that the waves of crime and passion which convulse the outer world pass by them, leaving them untouched: that, in fact, they are happier in their ignorance. This may be true to a certain extent. But it is also true that much might be done to make their lives nobler and happier. High ideals may be instilled into them. They can be made patriotic in the true sense of the word. They can be made to realise that the individual owes a duty to his or her country as well as to God. They can be taught how to make what is best out of their little home and circumstances, and above all, they can be taught that the hills far away look far greener when viewed with the mellowing light of distance than on closer inspection. "Is glas iad na cnuic i ḃfad uainn, aċt ní feurṁar."

It will require much labour, patience and enthusiasm to accomplish those ends, but le congnam Dé it can be done. Before discussing the means to our end, the causes working against our ideal must first be discovered. The chief cause is defective education, or education directed in the wrong channels. The average country boy or girl attends the primary school until the age of fourteen or fifteen. This is just the age at which education proper should begin. The mind is gradually developed, and it is now able to grapple with the useful problems of life, national, social, and religious. But what is the fate of the mind of the average boy or girl in the remote country district? School days once over, immediately a deep chasm yawns between that mind and development. The character of the environment is responsible for this mental stagnation. The mind requires materials to assist its development. The materials are (*a*) Books, (*b*) Conversation, (*c*) An intellectual atmosphere, (*d*) Familiarity with current happenings, and their effects on life, social, religious, and political. Now these are materials which are very scarce indeed in country districts. As far as literature is concerned, with the exception of the local weekly paper, very few books, magazines or papers find their way to these places. As for conversation, it is necessarily narrow in its scope, and forever running in the same old groove. it is generally harmless, but in some cases there is an undue tendency to gossip and scandal. Intellectual atmosphere there is none, and as for knowledge of current happenings and their bearing on life, nothing is known save the moiety gleaned from the aforementioned newspaper. This scrap of news is generally interpreted by the local smart man, of which species there is always one to be found.

Now, the obvious remedy against such a state of affairs is the establishment of societies or leagues where the young people (and, indeed, young and old) can meet, and talk, and interchange ideas. In addition to these societies the literary taste of the people should be encouraged and cultivated, and this can best be done by the establishment of a circulating library in every parish. This library should include good, selected books on various subjects, politics, religion, economics, and the lighter class of literature dealing with the fortunes of love and war. Or domestic libraries on approved lines would, where feasible, be even more efficacious.

In many places much good work has been done by the local Gaelic League in propagating the spirit of Irish Ireland, but in backward districts the mere teaching of the language is insufficient—perhaps it might be said practically useless unless supplemented by lectures, readings, debates. The minds are not educated enough. It is a case of sowing the seed without preparing the ground. Unless the young people understand the spirit of the Gaelic League and sympathise with it, there will be no enthusiasm, and without enthusiasm there will be no success. It would be well, then, if every country district could have its library, and its hall or assembly room, where periodic meetings could be held, and lectures, especially in Irish history, be given. Nor should the social side of life be forgotten either. Rural life in Ireland is very dull, and needs brightening, and during these long winter evenings the young people want some amusement which will be instructive and healthy as well as enjoyable. Céilidhthe, at which a programme of songs, Irish dances, recitations, and the like, is gone through, should be held occasionally. These Céilidhthe are frequently held in towns, but in

country places, where just they are most wanted, we very rarely hear of them. The boys should also be encouraged to form football, hurling, and handball associations, and should be given occasional lectures on the ancient Irish games and tournaments.

Perhaps, if an attempt were made by enthusiastic and earnest Gaels to carry out these suggestions, we might see an improvement in our people—less emigration, less drinking to excess, less poverty, and more contentment, peace and prosperity.

TEMPERANCE AND INDUSTRIAL REVIVAL

MOST readers of the daily papers must have noticed some time ago a paragraph under the attractive caption: "Nerves to decide the next great war." It was a little lecture on Temperance by the Kaiser, addressed to some officers of his navy; the same in substance he had already spoken to his army, and even to some university students on the occasion of one of his visits. Manifestly, he has strong convictions as to the relation between the prosperity of the Fatherland and the temperate lives of its people in every rank. If we were as interested in the subject, we might stay to remark that long before, and by one greater still, had the same connection been noted; for if we mistake not, Caesar speaks of some German tribes, the bravest and strongest of all, and whose valour and strength he ascribes to their simple and abstinent lives. For the present, however, we will think of a little country nearer home, and use the Kaiser and his Fatherland only as a text to suggest the subject indicated at the head of this paper.

In recent years we have heard much of the subject of industrial revival and of the duty of supporting home manufacture, and by this time we may assume every Irishman is concerned about such revival and whatever may help or hinder it. If we are ever to be a prosperous people such a revival must be, as it seems a condition precedent; and as a consequence we must prepare to compete with our rivals in the same field, and with

like methods and conditions. True, indeed, Ireland is mostly an agricultural country, and we may not hope to vie with countries more favoured in regard to industrial enterprise, nor to see Clare or Cork transformed into an Irish Lancashire. But that is not the same as to say that we are to have no industries, or that we are to rely exclusively on agriculture. There is no example of a prosperous country that so acted, and *we* hope to become prosperous. We must cultivate the industries that suit our circumstances. There are countries in Europe whose example has been frequently proposed to us, smaller than our own, and not more favoured, where cottage and other industries have flourished and contributed to the wealth and happiness of their people. "What has temperance to do with industrial progress?" is, therefore, a question which concerns us in Ireland to-day. In response to that question we shall turn, if we are wise, to the great industrial nations of the world, and hearken carefully to what the great leaders and magnates of industrial life have to say. If we do, we shall not take long to convince ourselves that the two chief conditions of success in the struggle—the keen and exacting competition for supremacy among the great industrial nations of the world—are education and temperance: education in all its branches and stages, and temperance, especially among the working and artisan classes. You may be sure that these practical men see good reason for their preference of the abstinent worker. Two things they look for at their hands—quantity and efficiency, and 'tis the lesson of their experience that drink is the worst enemy of both. The struggle in which they are engaged is an industrial struggle, in the school and *atelier* rather than in the battlefield; and it is their conviction that in either struggle no one

may in the end hope to compete with the man whose hours are regular and whose time is full time, whose eye is keen and whose arms are strong, because he has always avoided intoxicating drink. Therefore it is that some of the most thoughtful men of our time have proclaimed their conviction that the future is in the hands of the nations that shall prove themselves most abstinent.

All this is true to an extent which may seem incredible; and many may be disposed to think that they are reading one of those intemperate exaggerations which they only profess to expect from temperance advocates. So in the brief space at my disposal, I will try to show how absolute is the concensus and how strong the conviction of men who speak with authority, who represent different nations, and who may be taken as the exponents of the views of various classes, more particularly those connected with industrial enterprises. For a little country like our own, it must be of supreme interest to note the great industrial rivalry between the nations, the conditions that make for success, and especially, and above all, the lesson that seems to be everywhere learned, *viz.*, that supremacy depends on the workers chiefly: whether they are efficient, capable, and honest; and that these qualities depend on their temperance or intemperance more than on anything else whatever. Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the philanthropist and industrial magnate, declared some time ago that he had just delivered a great temperance lecture: it was the announcement that he was prepared to give a ten per cent. premium to those of his employes who became total abstainers.

In his book, "America at Work," Mr. Frazer speaks of the abstinence of business men and workers, and quotes: "The strain of business is at times simply

terrific. A man couldn't bear it if he drank. The head must be kept cool and clear and that can't be if he drinks. In such bitter and ruthless competition as exists to-day—not only America against the world, but against Americans themselves—we have to be water-drinkers in sheer self-protection." An American Consul, speaking to an English audience some years ago, used the significant if candid words: "If ever England is to compete with us, your workmen must be as temperate as ours."

The late Mr. Caine, M.P., after a visit to America, had much to say to his countrymen on the contrast on this head between English and American artisans: "When one examined the drinking customs of the United States it was found that the skilled artisans did not drink at all. At least seventy per cent. of those men were practically teetotallers. The consumption of drink among the lower classes there was largely among the emigrants. . . . And it was a striking fact that many of those modern industries in which our supremacy was challenged *had been established in States which were under the Prohibition law.* Now we come nearer home and see the other side. "Competition is so fierce," writes a British manufacturer, "that I am compelled to strain every nerve to keep my trade going. My fires are burning, and my metal is in the furnace, yet half the men are in the publichouse, instead of being at work. It means poverty to them and ruin to me." "The men you send me," writes another, "are of a very low type, drunken and depraved—a disgrace to the firm." Mr. Howarth had erected large spinning mills at Manchester when forthwith it was proposed to consult the wants of his men by opening licensed houses. Mr. Howarth expressed his appreciation as follows: "If those licenses are granted, I shall

pull down my mills. . . . I have laid down machinery at a cost of £100,000. I want the best men in the trade. But you, gentlemen, have surrounded my factories with drink dens, which are ruining my men. Either this *must stop*, or I must go." Mr. Howarth was the largest ratepayer in Manchester, and the licences were refused.

It were an easy task to multiply illustrations of a similar kind, and to show that in other lands the experience is the same and the contrast identical. But for the present, at least, I find myself *spatiis exclusus iniquis*, and I must only hope that I have culled a few facts that may be found suggestive, and pointed a lesson that may seem opportune.

PRIEST AND PEOPLE IN IRELAND

THE intimate and endearing relations that exist between the priest and his flock in Ireland, more especially in rural Ireland, constitute a peculiar phase of our national life, the real significance of which few Anglo-Irish writers, whether in poetry, drama, or fiction, have rightly understood. Some have missed it entirely for the all-sufficient reason that they knew nothing about it, while others, ignorantly informed and maliciously inclined, have made such a ridiculous travesty of it as would in any other country but forgiving Ireland ensure them well-merited castigation. Even those who have honestly attempted to expound this tempting feature of Irish life have not infrequently failed utterly through being alien to the peasantry in creed, nationality or social station. Indeed, its true inwardness and sacredness can only be known by a sort of esoteric knowledge, from which the non-Catholic writer is hopelessly shut out, and which the Catholic *litterateur* who is ignorant of country life in Ireland can scarcely appreciate. Hence the need of an authorised and sympathetic interpreter of the tenderest and most fascinating aspect of the inner or parochial life of Catholic Irelnad—a *terra incognita* to very, very many.

If there is anyone who ought to know the peasantry it is the secular missionary priest who lives and labours amongst them, their own well-loved and trusted *sagart a ruin*, whom every man, woman and child in the parish instinctively looks up to as guide, philosopher and friend, the partner and confidant of their joys and

their sorrows, their only earthly refuge in temporal and spiritual misfortune, and the kind indulgent father to whom they instinctively fly in the supreme hour of bitter trial, for they know his heart yearns to comfort them. And to make the bonds of Adam stronger still, he is, in nine cases out of ten, the son of a struggling tenant farmer, like one of themselves, who perhaps had to "sell the cow from the door" to meet the expenses of his boy's education. Aye, "fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind"; and the priest must needs experience a feeling of love and kinship with every family in his parish, when he thinks of the revered father and mother, brother and sister, who toiled and moiled for him, buoyed up with the blessed hope of seeing him "priested" some happy, happy day. Can he grasp the hand of honest labour without feeling again the warm clasp of the "vanished hand" that sweated and blistered for him?

As the peasantry, for obvious reasons, seldom find a voice among themselves capable of expressing adequately their real sentiments towards their idolised *sagart a ruin*, I am emboldened to try to interpret them. I sometimes think that Irish priests are to blame for allowing the scoffer and the Philistine to invade and occupy a field that is theirs by right. Why should they not utilise their unique opportunities and experience to let the world know the unearthly might and grandeur of simple Irish faith, especially at this crisis in the Church's history, when whole nations are drifting from the moorings of religion? Why allow the notion to go abroad that Ireland is remarkable for nothing save political squabbling, faction-fighting, match-making, mirth and gaiety, when the initiated know full well that behind the peasant's faults and follies there lies hidden an inner life of strange and

wondrous beauty, the supernatural life of faith in the unseen, which gilds his mean surroundings with the aurora-light of heaven ? See the poor peasant absorbed in prayer in the mountain chapel on a Sunday, or at the nightly Rosary in the blessed sanctuary of his humble cabin, and he is no longer the same individual you saw at the fair or the merry-making, but a transfigured being, soaring on the wings of faith into serene heights of ecstatic happiness, which the sordid materialist knows nothing of. Leave him his religion and his priests and he will not utter a sigh at seeing all else go by the board, if the Providence which orders all things sweetly so wills it. They are all in all to him : his pride and joy in prosperity, his solace in adversity, his happiness in life, his hope in death.

I, for one, am convinced that much good might be done by tales and stories illustrating this most attractive and lovable side of the Irish peasant's character ; and, acting on this conviction, I have burned much midnight oil in trying to paint pictures of it, pictures which certain sapient critics have severely criticised as overdrawn and impossible. Instead, however, of exaggerating their domestic virtues and their beautiful, God-fearing lives, I believe that through lack of skill I have understated them, for I have known instances of Irish faith the simple grandeur of which no words could express. I appeal to any missionary priest who knows the people if this is not so. Their child-like trust in God, their calm, serene resignation under trials, their tender chivalrous love of Mother Church, the sublime courage with which they meet the king of terrors, Death—all these are for me a constant source of wonder, heart-searching, humiliation and deep thankfulness for the privilege of ministering among them. And who can paint their veneration for the Lord's Anointed,

whom they look on as an angel walking among them, or as another Moses come down from the Mount, and horned with rays of glory. Truly, the faith of the Irish peasant is a wondrous thing, a spectacle to angels and men in this cold, materialistic age. They are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, our simple, unlettered peasantry, for all their faults and failings. If the Irish Church is the brightest jewel in the regal diadem of the Spouse of Christ, the credit is due to them.

Priests who live and labour among the people are so accustomed to witness instances of a faith that is akin to vision that they regard them as a matter of course. Here are a few: A peasant girl walks seven or eight miles to early Mass. She is fasting and barefooted, as she trudges through bog-paths and mireland, carrying her shoes in her hand until she reaches the house of a friend near the chapel, where she dons them clean and shining in order to enter the house of God becomingly. After receiving Holy Communion she returns the same dreary journey without breaking her fast, her heart elated with gladness, because the way for her is a walk to Emmaus. What an example she sets to the lady of fashion who rolls to church in her carriage, or stays away because of a shower of rain! Again. A young man keeps vigil at the church door, on the occasion of a Mission, from sunrise of a summer morning until seven o'clock, in order to be "first heard," since he was disappointed the previous day owing to the crowd of penitents, although he had waited patiently for his turn four or five hours. What could nerve him to such self-sacrifice except a faith that values the spiritual immeasurably above the material and temporal? And, after he "got to the Missioner," he goes home with a step as elastic as if he trod on air. An old

man spends a couple of hours hobbling on his crutches from his cabin to the "station-house," on a snowy winter morning, in order to hear Mass "when it came near him"; and the lowly kitchen where the Holy Sacrifice is offered is for him an enchanted palace of delight. The white-robed priest with the Host in his hands is greater and grander in his estimation than the king on his throne: and, as he raises his eyes heavenward after receiving the Bread of Life, he is singing a *Nunc Dimittis* in his heart, while tears of pure happiness roll down his aged cheeks. Can the wisdom of the world explain the foolishness of such things? It cannot, for they are too deep and subtle for its gross material intelligence. Only simple faith can understand simple faith.

Seeing the profound reverence which the Irish people have for an ordinary priest, I often wondered what would be their feelings if the Supreme Head of the Church, the Pope himself, were to come amongst them. They would simply go wild with joy. Cloth of gold would not be good enough to carpet his path: I verily believe willing hands enough would be found to spread under his feet from Cork to Donegal.

The union of priests and people in Ireland is a marriage made in heaven; a union of true hearts plighted in holiest troth, which no power on earth can sever.

THE HISTORY OF IRELAND

TO the neglect of the teaching of Irish History in our schools is, I believe, to be attributed, in great measure, the indifference of many of our people to the welfare of their native land, in other words, their lack of that great national virtue called patriotism. I fear this has not been seen with sufficient clearness by these able and devoted Irishmen and Irishwomen who have been in latter years so earnestly striving to create an Irish Ireland. How can we reasonably expect a people who know little or nothing of the history of their country to feel an interest in her fortunes, save inasmuch as these affect their own personal interests. How can we blame a people for not being proud of a country of whose past they are ignorant, or at most, have but a scant and imperfect knowledge. The first impulse given to the study of Irish as a spoken language was given by Irishmen who knew the history of Ireland, but who, in many instances, did not know, though they wished to know, her language. Now, I hold that the knowledge of the language of Ireland, unaccompanied by a knowledge of her history, will not be sufficient to create an Irish Ireland, or to stay the slow but sure progress of that national degradation styled Anglicisation.

I have dwelt some years amongst an Irish-speaking people who knew but little, if anything, of the past of their land ; and I can affirm that these people had little love or esteem for the language which they and their fathers spoke ; nor indeed, had they much concern about Ireland or the Irish cause. For this, I say, we could not

justly blame them. How could they be proud of a country of which they only knew that it grew potatoes and was too heavily rented, and was badly governed. It was the study of Irish history, written by patriotic Irishmen, which gave us the patriots of the past, and has given us those of the present. It was their knowledge of the history of their native land which inspired the latter to start that great Irish movement, so well and widely known as the Gaelic League. When the youth of Ireland are taught both the history and language of their native land, then indeed we may hope for a new Ireland. Then, and not till then, will the men and women of Ireland be really Irish in thought and sentiment, and not as too many of them are to-day, owing to a false and denationalising system of education, mere servile imitators of another people with whom they have but little in common save a common humanity —a people who differ so much from us that, as some of their leading men have declared, they have never been able to understand us. I entertain no feeling of hostility to the English people. I acknowledge their good qualities, for they are by no means devoid of such; but the English, or Anglo-Saxon, as they are proud to style themselves, are a people between whom and us, the Irish, nature itself has drawn a broad and distinct line of separation, geographical, moral, and intellectual. In fact, there are no two nations in Europe who differ more in character than the Irish and the English. This being admitted, the attempt to Anglicise us Irish is an unnatural one, and if unhappily it should succeed, would prove to us, the people of Ireland, a disastrous one, and perhaps to England also.

If (*absit omen*) the Irish people should ever become thoroughly Anglicised—they are at present partially so—Ireland's place among the nations would be lost

forever. To avert this last and crowning dishonour and disaster, we must hasten to erect the strongest and most effectual barrier in our power to devise. What is this barrier to be? In my opinion it must be a thorough knowledge of the history, language, and literature of our ancestors. We must learn the history of our country, and learn to speak her language, if we are to remain Irish in aught but name.

The importance of the restoration of the proper language of the Irish people must be evident to us all. An Irishman who does not know the language of his country may be, I admit, as good a Nationalist as Wolfe Tone or Emmet or Lord Edward Fitzgerald, but still he will lack something that would bind him yet more closely and firmly to his native land: something that would show to friend and foe that he was an Irishman, and that he was proud of being so, and that in acquiring and using his native tongue he had identified himself with his country's fortunes for weal and woe, and had devoted himself forever to her cause. His nationality may have been the true brand, but the knowledge and use of his country's language, and his zeal for its diffusion, will impress it with the hall-mark. He might have sworn allegiance to Ireland before, but by using her language he puts on her uniform that all men might know what he was and under what banner he had enlisted. If those true and great patriots I have mentioned were living now, I am convinced that they would be amongst the most ardent promoters of the Irish language movement. For my part, I do not see how a man can despise the language of his native land, even if that language was a rude and unpolished one; for language is the most distinctive mark of nationality, a mark which all men recognise. If every nation cherishes its own language, why should we be an

exception? But what nation in Europe can boast a language superior to our own, a language so venerable for its antiquity, so admirable in its structure, and for the copiousness of its vocabulary, a language in which alone the Irish mind—*perfervidum ingenium Scotorum*—finds its most perfect utterance? Shall we not cling fondly to a language in which the joys and sorrows, the glories and the triumphs of our race have found expression and record for more than two thousand years—a language that enshrines all that is most precious in the history and traditions of the Gael: a language in which Patrick the Holy showed our ancestors the path to Heaven, and Brian the Brave the way to freedom, the language of the saint, the warrior, and the sage, during so many centuries of freedom and renown. It seems to me nothing less than providential that in these days, as it were in the eleventh hour, the minds of so many of our young people seemed filled, I may say inspired, with a noble ardour to acquire a language which the neglect of those who, unfortunately, did not recognise its value, and the enmity of those who hated it as they hated the race whose heritage it was, alike have tended to injure or destroy. It would seem that this almost miraculous revival of interest in the language of our race is a happy presage of the uprising of the race itself, of the coming of the time when the long-oppressed Gael, speaking his own beautiful language, will rule in his own fair land. I confess that I am one of those Irishmen whose hopes are fixed on the uprising of an independent Irish nation in the future. But, suppose the present Anglicisation of our people progresses till it is complete, what interest could any Irish Nationalist take in Ireland's future, whether free or fettered? In the eyes of a true Irish Nationalist the spectacle of an Anglicised Ireland, a western

Britain—a smaller and meaner England—would afford no interest save such a melancholy one as drew the American Indian to visit the lonely graves of his fathers in a land forever lost to his race. What stronger or more effectual barrier can be raised against the threatening *Anglicisation*—that is the *denationalisation* of the Irish people, than the knowledge of the language, history, and literature of their country. I know of none. In working for the cultivation and diffusion of the language of Ireland, we are working for the very existence of Irish Nationality, and in this work every true Irish Nationalist should lend his aid. It is true the spirit of Nationality still exists amongst many of our people who no longer speak the language of their ancestors, for that spirit is not easily destroyed. But will it continue to exist if we permit our language to perish, if the youth of Ireland continue to frequent schools from which the language, literature, and history of Ireland are excluded? It is not reasonable to think so. This unnatural system of excluding subjects which so deeply, so vitally concern Ireland, if persevered in, can have but one ending too sad to contemplate. It will seal the fate of Ireland as an Irish nation.

CAN WE SAVE THE IRISH LANGUAGE?

TO two classes of readers this will seem an unnecessary question: to those who believe that the Irish language is dead, and to those who believe that the movement for its extension is making the most satisfactory progress.

Between these two extremes there must be a considerable number of men and women for whom the question is of vital interest. If the Irish language is dead, the Language Movement is a deplorable misdirection of energy. For a dead language there is no resurrection. If Irish is just "dying" the case is desperate enough; the disease itself argues in the nation a lack of the only remedies which can be of any avail. If, not dead or dying, Irish be merely in serious danger, then a national effort wisely directed may lead to its recovery. We may take it as granted that if Irish can be saved, such a national effort should be made.

Over the larger portion of Ireland Irish, as a vernacular speech, is dead. Over a considerable part of the country it is, as a vernacular, hardly even a memory. In certain areas it is still the only language spoken; in others, those of the older generation speak Irish, those of the younger understand and can speak it, but do not except under compulsion. I have not figures before me to show the extent to which Irish is spoken. Even if I had I should not quote them, for in this matter we have to deal not with figures so much as with facts, moral and physical—with prejudices and tendencies.

Without going into figures, then, I take it as rather generally admitted that in quantity and quality spoken Irish, except in a few districts—such as Connemara, and some districts in Mayo—is still on the decline. Despite what has been done since the foundation of the Gaelic League, there is less pure Irish now spoken in Ireland than was spoken twenty years ago. We have more speakers of Irish and less spoken Irish.

To prove the possibility of saving the Irish language, it has been sought to establish a parallel between the present condition of Ireland and a past condition of certain European States in which languages have been, by a national effort, saved from extinction. Historical parallels of this kind may be encouraging without being convincing. Languages in desperate plight have been actually saved: it is well. What has been accomplished may be accomplished. But why go abroad for historical arguments? Have we not in the modern history of Ireland the very clearest proof of the possibility of a language-change. Is it not a fact that over a very large portion of Ireland a vernacular has within the memory of those still living been supplanted by another form of speech? If so, the processes by which this has been done deserve most careful attention. They may serve again.

To show the revolution that has taken place in Ireland within sixty years I shall take a typical inland district, comprising some few parishes on each side of the Curlieu Hills, which lie between the counties of Roscommon and Sligo. In this district at present, Irish is not spoken, is understood by hardly anyone under sixty years of age; few speakers, indeed, survive. I know of intimate acquaintance three generations of people in this district. Of my own schoolmates hardly more than a few know any Irish at all, and certainly none except what by

their own efforts they may have in late years acquired. Their fathers and mothers know, perhaps, a few words. They will tell you that they knew their prayers in Irish in their childhood, but that apart from these no Irish was spoken to them or taught to them. The interesting thing about the district is the story told by the grandparents. These will tell you that they spoke nothing but Irish in their childhood; that Irish was the language of the pulpit. They were taught English at school and encouraged to speak it, and beaten if they did not. These old people—the few who survive—still speak Irish well, though they find at first a certain amount of discomfort in the use of the language owing to their long want of practice in speaking it. I may remark, too, that they speak a rather pure and forcible English, into which they have transferred great numbers of idioms and turns of speech familiar to them in the Irish. Note well, that these people had to learn English "at school," necessarily without any assistance from the people at home except encouragement and advice to speak English and be decent. Remember, too, what these schools were like. The teacher was a man who, somehow or other, had picked up a little English and arithmetic, English being a consideration far beyond all other qualifications. The schoolhouse was some kind of a barn; the work of "education" was liable to many breaks and interruptions, and the schoolgoing period, I understand, was very much shorter than it is at present. But, while it lasted, the pupils, at peril of their flesh, made a desperate onslaught on the "Readin'-med-aisy" and "Spellin'-book"—and they grew up able to speak tolerable English. They meant, at least their parents meant them, to learn English, and wretched as the schools undoubtedly were, they succeeded.

When these people married they taught their children not the old speech that was as honey on their lips, but the English which with so much pain they had acquired. Poor people, they thought they were acting for the best. They had been brought up in the belief that English was the top-notch of respectability, the key that opened Sesame, and they were determined that their children should not be left without a boon so precious. Prayers which they had never quite learned in English (some of them pray in Irish to the present day) were continued in Irish in their homes; apart from that, Irish was to their children an esoteric speech employed by their elders to express things not meant for their ears. The children, then, grew up ignorant of any language but English; at home or in school they never heard anything else with the unimportant exception I have just noticed. And thus the change of vernacular, which we are told in these later times is so difficult, is wrought during the growth of one generation; in the second the miracle is complete!

What has been done so easily a few generations back can be as easily done to-day if the Irish people will. There is the problem in a nutshell. If the Irish people could be convinced of the necessity of Irish as firmly as they were convinced in the middle of the last century or a little earlier of the necessity of English, the future of the Irish language would no longer be a matter for the least anxiety. Time alone would be required to solve the language problem.

I am well, indeed, painfully aware that the cases are not quite parallel. When our grandfathers and grandmothers set themselves seriously to learn English, assuming that the tendency remained unchecked, the ultimate triumph of English was a matter of absolute certainty. It mattered little if the Anglicising move-

ment failed of its object during one or two generations. English could not be lost: to the East and to the West it was the language of millions; there was a limitless reserve of English to fall back on. Not so with the revival of vernacular Irish. We cannot afford to lose a generation, a decade, even a year. Year by year the reserve of pure unsullied Irish grows less. The purely Irish-speaking areas are growing smaller and smaller. There is no Irish-speaking territory west from Arran, north from Tory, south from Ring. That is the weakness of our position. If our work is to come to anything we must have back the Irish-speaking districts. When there are no longer any Irish-speaking districts there will be no longer an Irish movement. If the source fail, pitiable will be our attempts to draw supplies from our diminishing and stagnant streams. The Gaelic League has admittedly done much good for the country; as regards the saving of the language we are as yet at the beginning of the work; merely ag ṡgríobaḋ leis an uaċtar. Nominally, Irish has been taught for several years in schools up and down the country; yet go into the average school where Irish is taught, listen to the pupils recite something they have learned in Irish—say, the Lord's prayer—and draw your own conclusions. If you are an Irish speaker, you will leave saddened and chastened. Pursue your inquiries still further; go into the branches of the Gaelic League, and you will find that while many have acquired a passable knowledge of "Gaelic," comparatively few have reached any degree of proficiency in Gaeḋilg. Only in very recent years have the teachers had an opportunity of acquiring the training which is absolutely essential for the teaching of even the most elementary Irish. And let us not forget that from the first lessons on the

Direct Method to fluency in ordinary conversation is a far cry; also, that speakers of Irish are not turned out by teachers who cannot themselves speak the language. The schools and the Irish-speaking districts—these are the two great problems; the former may easily solve itself in time; but the problem of the Irish-speaking districts is urgent, and further, cannot be solved by any organisation, however excellent, without the earnest co-operation of men of local influence, and especially of the priests.

THE OIREACHTAS

An Irish Week in Killarney, August, 1914

THE nineteenth annual *Oireachtas* proved a marked success in Killarney. The tourist and tripper resort was transformed for a week into the stronghold of the Gael. Wherever one turned, the kilt and the tartan were in evidence, and the ear was softly assailed by the rich mellow notes of the old tongue. Killarney was taken by surprise. She had looked forward to a brisk week of business, but came to learn ere long that there was a deeper import and significance in the business of the visitors. The assembled Gaels displayed the spirit of their mission as they discussed in animated groups of threes or fours the prospects of the cause, the progress of the *Ard-Fheis*, the quality of the competitions or the march past of the Volunteers. Anon, a merry ripple of laughter and bright cheery exchange of salutations as old friends renewed old acquaintance. It was the Club of the Four Provinces: the sharp northern accent blended with the soft brogue of Kerry, the slender consonants of the West were answered in the broader rendering of the South. It was a great display, and visitors and visited vied in mututal congratulations when the strenuous week was over. There was not a jarring element, if we except the weather, but even the weather brightened as the days sped by, and Friday's *Turas* through the Gap of Dunloe and down the Lakes was a delightful termination to a week teeming with work and mirth. So general was the satisfaction of our visitors that a wag summed

up the situation by suggesting that the *Oireachtas* should be made a "movable fixture" in Killarney for the future.

This *Oireachtas*, synchronising with the outbreak of the European war, was many-sided, and the lighter vein was intertwined with the onerous work of the *Ard-Fheis* and the less interesting of the Competitions. The hurling match between Cork and Thurles attracted over 12,000 people—the largest crowd ever assembled in Killarney. There was some grumbling at the gate arrangements—but that was inevitable—the number who turned up exceeded all expectations. The Pipers' Competition after the match was of no less interest, as band after band—eleven in all—marched up and down the pitch to their martial tunes. The feature of the day was the Procession of 2,500 Volunteers from all parts of Kerry, an escort to the genial President of the League. On the Wednesday a more novel display was the open-air Competition for Volunteer Corps, and as the Killarney boys marched in their place with rifles and fixed bayonets, cheers rent the air. No blame to them that they were outclassed by Limerick and Tralee—the former especially delighting the vast audience by their smart military bearing and appearance. It was whispered they were ex-military men! so much the better when the crisis comes: then history may repeat itself in the descendants of Sarsfield's stalwarts.

The majority of the Competitions were held in the East Avenue Hall, an up-to-date building with a seating accommodation of nearly 1,000, while its spacious covered verandahs permitted of several Competitions being held concurrently. The choirs attracted a considerable audience: oratory and story-telling had a moderate following. The dancing was conducted in the Earl of Kenmare's demesne, placed

at the disposal of the *Oireachtas* Committee for the week.

The afternoon Entertainments in the East Avenue Hall were highly appreciated, perhaps Monday night's concert most of all. The address of Mr. Neil Shaw, the official representative of the Gaels of Scotland, was followed with keen interest by a large section of the audience, and the sentiments he expressed towards his brother Gaels in Ireland were loudly applauded. He looks somewhere between thirty-five and forty, with the erectness of the Highlander, a soft voice for a Scotchman, an easy manner, slow to enter into conversation, but vigorous and impressive when he does, a depth of energy and latent enthusiasm hidden beneath a calm placid countenance, the Douglas Hyde of Scotland, except that the *Craoibhin* more easily breaks into a joke and a smile. Such was Neil Shaw. He made quite a number of friends in Killarney—we can assure him a hearty welcome should he return again. Rory McLeod, his compatriot, is of the breezy style—he charmed his audience with his entrancing old airs—the words of one, "*A Eire, bhi tu Saor,*" having been specially composed for this visit by an old Scotch Professor of ninety-two. Whether in the serious or the lilting style, he carries everyone with him, but those were most favoured who heard Rory at his best in the little festive gatherings that succeeded the concerts.

The *Oireachtas* Ode was recited by Diarmuid mac Coitir, of Ballingeary—an expert in Irish verse assured me that it was marvellous how Diarmuid had mastered the intricacies of the Irish Rann. The official *Oraid,* "*Beatha Teangan a Labhairt,*" was delivered by Father John Lynch, of Glenbeigh. He has got a fine style of Irish oratory—his language flowed rhythmically, his

elocution was studied and moderate, the enunciation was a treat—not a syllable was lost of the many neatly-turned compounds he employed. He treated his theme in a lucid and orderly fashion, and well deserved the rounds of applause that greeted his stirring appeal on behalf of the old tongue.

The dramas performed on two afternoons by a Dublin Amateur Corps reflect great credit on the manager, actors and actresses. Their success bids fair for the future of the Irish drama—a powerful lever for bending public opinion to the vitality of the Gaelic Movement. The acting was natural, the voices strong and clear, the enunciation good. There was more grace and finish in the elocution of the actresses: there seemed a certain awkward inflection on the part of the actors, especially in interrogations. This failing scarcely belongs to the genius of the language and might well be eliminated. It might be well, too, if the tone of our plays were generally more elevating—even in Irish we sometimes savour somewhat of the stage Irishman. I trust the Amateur company who visited us will not take these remarks amiss—they have every reason to congratulate themselves and we heartily wish them further successes in the future.

The Official Reception was a great event. The dance that followed was quite a swell affair—the Irish costumes worn by a large number of the ladies attracted general admiration, so graceful and simple were they, doing equal justice to youth and middle-age. All the dances were Irish—a source of some annoyance to the uninitiated—but it was an Irish night that Irish Ireland had reason to be proud of.

In connection with the *Oireachtas* a local Exhibition of arts, crafts, industries and a museum was organised on an elaborate scale. The Department contributed

generously towards the project, and the Exhibition justified their generosity. A feature of the Exhibition was the daily delivery of addresses by well-known Gaels, one of whom referred to the contempt many Irishmen had for things Irish, whereupon a well-known ecclesiastic humorously remarked that even the Kerry cow was despised until quite recently, but that now when the species was almost extinct, fancy prices were being offered by foreigners for genuine specimens of the breed.

On Thursday, the Flower Show was held under different auspices. Leaguers and non-Leaguers united in appraising nature's rarest charms—a wealth of sweet-pea, carnations, orchids, gladioli. The Flower Show was an additional treat in a week crowded with incident. The presence of several bands, including the famous Lusk Pipers in picturesque garb, with their raven-crested banner, completed the fairy scene.

The final event of the week was perhaps the most enjoyable from the social view-point—the *Turas* round the Gap and Lakes. There are two little incidents worth recording. One—a tiny little tot of four, one of Dublin's few native born speakers—toddling along her weary way on foot through the Gap. I felt inclined to take the little one up before me on my pony—a lazy rascal at that—but my equestrian abilities were so limited that I dared not venture the risk of a double accident. Mine might not matter—but the little one—well, I thought discretion the better part and stifled my valorous instincts. The other incident was pathetic in the extreme—the sight of sightless Carl Hardebeck, our famous musician and composer, trudging his weary six miles over a rugged and winding way. He had a kind word from all and responded in the language of the Gael. The Lakes! what did they mean to him!

but he might have enjoyed the rocking and swaying of his trusty boat as she sped swiftly down the old Weir Rapids. Seldom did I see the Rapids in better form—and as our own boat was borne on the surging swells, some faces blanched, but great was the relief as we glided calmly under Toothache Bridge: even the more timorous in their superstition dipped their dainty fingers in the current to save the dentist's expenses. From Brickeen to Ross Castle our two large boats kept company: it was remarked that one had all the dignity, the other all the talent. We shared the talent, dignity was lost amid the grandeur of the densely-wooded Toomies. At Ross Castle our official photographer was at hand. Many of us shall never meet again, but we have something to remind us of the genial souls who helped to make the Killarney *Oireachtas* a success. Some were solemn, some were gay, but one and all agreed that the *Oireachtas* without the Gap and Lakes might after all have been a tame proceeding!

APOSTLES OF THE PRESS

NOW-A-DAYS light reading is the pastime alike of rich and poor. It is a mania, an obsession that has taken hold of young and old. Go where you will and you meet proofs of it. If you travel by rail you see your fellow-passengers sitting in solemn silence, each with eyes glued to a book, newspaper or magazine. Indeed, you feel like a fish out of water among them without something to read. You will see people passing by scenes of fairest loveliness without once lifting their eyes off the page of the fifth-rate novel, whose sickly inanities have more interest for them than the beauty of God's creation. If you enter a tramcar you will see the tired clerk, or business girl, reading for dear life the worthless tittle-tattle of the evening paper, while the idle young lady of fashion peruses ostentatiously the latest erotic novel from the lending library. Even the grimy working man is reading, although his *gout* is for something in the racing, footballing, or boxing line, with a special relish for murders, robberies and outrages generally.

Leave the city and go to the country town, and you notice the same rage for reading something, or anything. The baker's boy, with his basket on his head, bumps against you, so immersed is he in the blood and thunder of the penny dreadful. The nurse-girl forgets the crying baby while following the fortunes of the Duchess in the halfpenny novelette. The starved gamin of the slums is grinning over a comic paper, while the wastrel corner-boy is sedulously browsing on

a journal of snippety bits. And the shopkeeper's boarding-school miss sits at the open window of the drawing-room assimilating trashy novels day by day.

Go from the town to the quiet rural valley, and you still find the young people reading, or anxious to get something to read. The young girl buys the two-penny story-book or penny novelette, when she goes to the market, and, having read it, lends the vile publication to others, with deplorable results not infrequently. In the country districts it is the fashion now to read, as it was the fashion in the good old times to spin. Instead of wool-rolling for the spindle, the modern Irish colleen spends her evening wool-gathering with gallivanting heroes in the realms of fiction. If Lord Brougham were now living, instead of saying "The school-master is abroad," he would probably say, "The newspaper is abroad, the magazine is abroad." The Press is, indeed, the great university of our day: a source of untold blessing in the hands of the good, a curse when made use of by debased and corrupted minds to bring to light the foul thoughts and images, which, but for the printing machine, would have remained in the slimy filth of the intellects that conceived them.

Alas, the art of printing, perverted from its beneficent purpose, by the wickedness of man, is a terrible engine of destruction: a thousand-handed Briareus scattering broadcast over the world the seeds of pestilence; a Pandora's Box full of evils and distempers; a Destroying Angel bringing death alike to the mansions of the rich and the cabins of the poor. Examine ever so cursorily the cheap literature which the London gutter-press vomits forth weekly, and you will find that the trail of the serpent of obscenity is over it all. The London publishers are wise in their generation. They

are students of human nature. They know the proneness of youth to evil, their tendency to seek the forbidden. The materialistic, secularist spirit of English board-school education has created a demand for unwholesome erotic literature, and accommodating publishers consider it business to supply it. They dump a goodly cargo regularly on our shores in the hope of creating a demand for their wares among the primitive Irishry.

In my experience of present-day Irish life, I do not know of anything so maddening and so saddening as the spectacle of the manager of a rural bookstall arranging his weekly consignment of literary garbage and drivel, and pictorial semi-indecency and folly. He sets before you a weary waste of flaunting, flaring journals and pamphlets, outwardly attractive to the eye, but inwardly full of filth and rottenness. And, when I see a clean Catholic magazine hidden away in a corner, it seems to me to shrink from contact with the foul, loathsome things with which it is surrounded.

Anon, there comes a happy innocent school-girl, or a bright, pure-souled boy, fresh from the prayerful halls of convent or college. They are going home for the holidays, and their minds crave for light literature: the artist could not have executed more suggestively were the cunning fiend himself his drawing-master. Soon they are turning over the pages of novelette and magazine, and then, after an exciting search in the literary midden, off they go to the railway carriage, each with a bundle of reading matter well calculated to tarnish the lily bloom of their souls. Unconsciously they drink in the poison prepared for them by debased minds: unwittingly, they swallow the gilded and sugared tablets so daintily made up for them by the dispensing chemists of the gutter press. Oh, what a terrible

accounting will those men and women have to give, who first murder the innocence of the little ones of Christ! Truly a corrupt and decadent press is the most deadly of all plagues and scourges. It is working such havoc among the youth of Ireland that for many of them the art of reading, like the dower of beauty, is a fatal gift.

There is an old proverb which savs that although God sends us meat, the d—— sends us cooks. In like manner, it may be said that, when Providence has given the blessings of education, the Evil One has sent us bad books to mar its effects. In view of this policy —although it may seem obscurantism to say so—it would, doubtless, be better for some, better for their souls' sake, if the printed page were to them an interesting collection of curious figures, and no more.

But if the press is an influence for evil it is also a mighty and Providential power for good. Hence, there is a crying need of more apostles of the press: men and women who have received the shaping faculty, the power of literary expression, and who will employ their gifts wisely and fearlessly in defence of our idolised mother, Holy Church. The Catholic author and journalist should be a *Malleus Hereticorum*, a hammerer of heretics: he should be another Machabeus armed with a "sword of gold," the Catholic pen, to smite the enemies of our faith. He should go forth as a hero to rid the land of the hydras, the Gorgons and Minotaurs of a corrupt press. He should be a crusader engaged in a holy war, a chivalrous knight without fear or reproach, whose good sword, the Catholic pen, will leap from its scabbard to avenge even a covert insult to his Holy Grail, the religion he reveres. He should dip his pen in the liquid fire of zeal for the true, the pure, the good.

No doubt, there is little hope of obtaining wealth, or kudos, by writing for the Catholic press—if, indeed, there is a Catholic press—but, if the earthly reward is uninviting, the cause is grand, the cause is a noble one. Those renegades who have achieved fame at the expense of their faith have purchased their laurel crown at too dear a price. Let the smile of the Church be the Catholic writer's most dearly prized reward. Leave the rest to fate. Catholic writers have secured a place in English literature which enables us to hold our heads high. Their names are among the great immortals from Pope to Francis Thompson, whose religious poem, "The Hound of Heaven," has witched the world with its "golden musics."

Blessed are the apostles of the press, who provide edifying, entertaining reading for the home circle; stories, articles, sketches that may be read aloud without bringing the blush of shame to the modest maiden's cheek. Would anyone dare to read aloud in the bosom of the family even the most innocuous of the Yellow atrocities? Blessed is the labour of the Catholic writer who spurns the siren songs of neo-Paganism and secularism to earn the reward "of him that soweth justice," by giving the service of his pen and the riches of his mind to the cause of Catholic literature.

"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings of good things."

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF IRISH

WHAT good is Irish? Why waste the time of poor boys who have got to earn their living in some trade or profession, by teaching them an obsolete language which can never be of any use to them? Why not teach them something that will enable them to earn their bread and butter? Such are the questions that even now after twenty years of Gaelic League propaganda, are still asked by certain parents and teachers.

It is extraordinary, to begin with, how this bread-and-butter argument is exclusively reserved for the study of Irish, though it applies equally to many other subjects on the programmes of our schools, both primary and secondary. Why not urge it, for example, against music? What good will the tonic sol-fa of the primary school do the poor boy who is destined for the farm or the counter? How will the Geometry or Trigonometry of the secondary school, help the future doctor to mix medicines or the future lawyer to plead cases? Why not urge the argument against religion itself? Would not a man be able to annex more bread and butter if he were not hampered by an early knowledge of certain precepts of the decalogue? The bread-and-butter argument proves too much, and therefore proves nothing. The direct answer to it is, that we are not mere animated machines, created for the absorption of certain quantities of bread and butter. God Almighty has not merely given us bodies to feed. He

has also given us souls to sanctify by the knowledge and love of Himself, intellects to train and sharpen in the knowledge of the great world that He has created, hearts to beat in sympathy with our country and our kind, imagination to enjoy beauty in form, colour and sound, and to give zest and interest to life. Not in bread-winning power alone doth education consist, but in the development, as far as may be, of all our faculties, for our own greater rational enjoyment of life, for the welfare of our country and of our race, and for the glory of our Creator Himself.

It follows, therefore, that certain subjects must be included in an educational programme, which, though they have no direct bearing on a boy's future career, nevertheless, indirectly and remotely, prepare him for life, by developing to the full the latent potentialities of his mind and heart.

Now, if some such non-practical subjects must be included in a school programme, what should they be ?

Educationalists are pretty generally agreed that the acquisition of a second language is the best all-round method of developing the mind. There are other subjects which will impart in a higher degree certain specific qualities to the mind. Mathematics is a better training in accuracy. Logic gives better development of the reasoning powers. History and Geography train the memory. Poetry develops the imagination and the literary taste. Metaphysics will develop deep and accurate thinking. But the study of a second language contains, though in a lesser degree, the educational potentialities of all those others. The memory is powerfully developed and trained by the effort to retain the words of the new language, with all its etymological inflections of declension and conjugation, as well as the syntactical constructions and

modes of expression or thought that may be peculiar to it. The judgment is exercised in the judicious selection of the proper word amongst a number in the one language, that may present themselves, as best fitted to express in translation the particular shade of meaning of a certain word in the other. Literary taste is stimulated and refined by the opening out to the mind of a new literature, to be compared with that which is already familiar to the student. Nay, it is certain that it is only by acquiring a second language that a man can really acquire a good knowledge of his first language; for there is a profound truth in the paradox which says, that he that knows but one language knows none. No man, for example, by the study of English alone, can acquire a knowledge of that language comparable to that of the man who knows English and Latin, or English and French, or English and Irish.

It is, therefore, an educational commonplace, that the study of a second language is on the whole the best instrument of mental development. It follows consequently, that if we were to teach our boys and girls any language under the sun, from Ancient Greek to Chocktow, we would not be wasting their time, but would, by assisting in their mental development, be preparing them for the struggle of life, at least as much as if we were to train them by trigonometry or the study of the binomial theorem, or metaphysics, or one of the various other branches of learning which are really taught, in the case of the vast majority, not for themselves, but merely as a means to an end, namely the drawing out or education of the mental faculties. But naturally, amongst languages some will be better adapted for the purpose than others; and what may be best for one people or one class of society may not

be best for another. Assuming then, that a second language is a most useful educational instrument, it remains for us to inquire what that language ought to be in the primary and intermediate schools of Ireland.-

Let us consider the question on educational grounds alone, apart from all question or consideration of national sentiment. The two great classic languages of the ancient world, Latin and Greek, long held undisputed possession of the educational field. And with good reason, for on the one hand they are so far removed in vocabulary and construction from our modern languages, that the acquisition of them demands a greater mental effort, and so conduces to greater mental development than would the study of modern languages ; and, on the other hand, these two classic tongues are enriched with a noble literature, unsurpassed in many respects by the literature of any age or country. And so, since the Renaissance at least, nearly all the great minds of the civilized world have been nurtured on the undying literatures of Greece and Rome, which, despite the hurry and bustle of modern life, have until quite recently been considered as the *sine qua non* of a liberal education. Recently, however, there has been a revulsion of feeling against the classics, and an inclination to adopt instead some of the great modern languages, partly because of their usefulness in travel and commerce, and partly because the study of the classics necessitates a length of time incommensurate with the educational results obtained. The modern languages, it is contended, while inferior as a mere mental gymnastic, have the advantage that they can be taught as living tongues, that they thus impart a training in phonetics, that the student may in after life have opportunities of perfecting his knowledge of the acquired language by intercourse with native

speakers, and that in addition they are of practical advantage in travel and commerce.

Assuming, therefore, that modern spoken languages are to be substituted for the ancient classics, as an intellectual training for the great majority of our boys and girls, we come to inquire what modern tongue would best suit them here in English-speaking Ireland. It ought not to be hard to show that on educational grounds alone, and much more on grounds of nationality and patriotism, the claims of the Irish language are paramount.

In the first place, Irish is further removed in idiom and construction from English than are any of the modern languages usually taught, French, for example, or Italian. For that very reason it is, like the classics, of greater educational value. Again, the French learned at school (and the same is true of other foreign tongues) is in very few cases, indeed, availed of by Irish students in after life, for either commercial or literary purposes. It is thrown aside once school-days are over; there are no opportunities for speaking it, and so it is soon forgotten, and largely fails in its educational results. It would be quite different with Irish. Our children would, I believe, take to their native tongue with more avidity than they would to any foreign language, if it were only taught as it should be. It would be learned in a rational fashion as a language that they would have opportunities of speaking, and which in these days of the Gaelic Revival, would be a source of pride and gratification to them in after life. It would open up to them the closed book of the nomenclature of their country and of its ancient clans, showing them beauty and significance where before they saw nothing but uncouth and meaningless vocables. It would add a new zest to the study of native history,

and tend more than any other study to bind young Irish hearts to their motherland, by the strong bonds of a well-informed and rational patriotism.

These considerations would hold good if our native language were the most uncouth and barren dialect in Europe. But the truth is that Irish is one of the most highly developed of Indo-European tongues, with an ancient literature hardly inferior in its kind to the masterpieces of Greece itself. Among modern languages, it holds, by the consent of all great linguists, an honoured place, being at once flexible in construction, copious in its vocabulary, and eminently rich in phonetic sounds. Indeed, it is said to be second only to Russian in the number and variety of its sounds, and should, therefore, like Russian, give those who speak it an enormous advantage in the acquisition of other tongues. Like modern German and ancient Greek, it can increase its vocabulary indefinitely by compound formations from its own roots ; it has much of the flexibility of French and its ready adaptability to flowing conversation, while its system of aspiration and eclipsis gives it much of the soft tunefulness of Italian.

To sum up then. School-time is not necessarily wasted because spent on subjects that have not immediately in view the bread-and-butter aim, or direct preparation for a trade or profession. Of such non-practical subjects there is none more highly educative than the acquisition of a second language. Amongst the various tongues that might be studied, none has so strong a claim on the attention of our Irish boys and girls as their own native Gaelic tongue, as well on grounds of educational value as on grounds of national sentiment and patriotic duty.

IRISH ART

LONG have our early illuminated manuscripts engaged the attention of scholars and antiquarians, and it is gratifying to be able to add that their beauty of design and harmony have won the admiration of the most capable judges. In estimating this flattering evidence of their beauty, we should remember the remote period, and the special circumstances under which this noble art had its birth and development. This will take us back fully fourteen centuries in our country's history, when the night of barbarism hung darkly on most European countries, yet a period when in Ireland its science and religion were a recognised light to Europe.

Monasteries at that period were very numerous throughout the land. They were famous as schools of religion and the training homes of holy men whose names are still reverently inscribed on the pages of our home and foreign annals. But our monasteries were schools of art as well as homes of religion and science, and these were the homes in which this noble art had its birth. And our monks were the masters under whom it had its growth and marvellous development.

The vast numbers of students who crowded to our schools, many of whom came from abroad in search of knowledge, made the multiplication of books a matter of urgent necessity. The urgency of this need called a new profession into being. Its members were learned men fitted for their duties by special training. They were employed in every convent,

where they devoted their lives to the transcription and multiplication of books for the honour of religion or the extension of science. They were known as scribes, and in our early annals we find several laudatory notices of those learned and venerable men. It was natural and fitting that the sacred volumes of scripture should have a first claim on the care and talents of such men. And so we find that the earliest and most beautiful of our illuminated volumes, the "Book of Kells," is a copy of the gospels. The "Book of Durrow" consists of fragments of the gospels. And after the sacred book of revelation, there was no book which the Irish held in greater veneration than the "Book of Armagh," which is our oldest extant record of the life and labours of St. Patrick. These, and such as these, were the books on which our early Irish scribes lavished all their skill, and poured out all the powers of their art in creating the various artistic forms in which they have enshrined their pages.

It is obvious, therefore, that under the circumstances the output of literary work in our early schools must have been enormous; and that the production of artistic work was in proportion. Nor does the comparatively small number of those priceless art treasures still extant at all effect the force of this estimate. We do not forget that the vandals were amongst us and at their evil work for centuries. They were equally hostile to all that represented our race, our religion, our civilisation, our art treasures and science. Hence thousands of our art treasures perished in the flames which destroyed the monastic houses in which they were preserved. It was so with Northman and Norman and Roundhead by whom Ireland was obsessed for centuries.

In addition we find that many of those art treasures

were carried away to the distant scenes of their labours and triumphs by our Irish monks in spreading the gospel through Europe. And so they have, many of them, been preserved to our time in the monasteries which they had founded, or with which they were closely connected, as unpurchasable treasures. Amongst those historical and memorable spots we may mention St. Gall's and Bobbio, Chauffhausen and Wurzburg, the Ambrosian Library at Milan, Turin, the Bodleian Library, and Trinity College, Dublin, in our own day.

It was natural that in course of time those treasures should be referred to under distinctive and recognised titles. And so we find some known as the "Book of Kells" and the "Book of Durrow," from the names of the particular monasteries in which they were written. Sometimes they are named from the particular locality in which they were produced, as the "Book of Lindisfarne" and the "Book of Armagh." They also were sometimes known by the name of the particular artist or scribe by whom they were completed, as in the case of the "Book of Dimma" and the "Book of Recemarch."

Though the sacred books and the other works of religious interest attracted almost exclusively the pictorial art of our scribes, yet their zeal in this respect did not weaken their energies in the transcription of the scientific and literary treatises then usually studied in our schools. Even Ledwich attests that in the fifth and sixth centuries the course of studies in the Irish schools was extensive. "In our Abbies, profane and sacred literature was cultivated. The Irish exercised their genius in acquiring languages, ecclesiastical history, and the liberal arts, science, grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy." In

those times, or for centuries after, there was no printing press. The multiplication of books was the work of the human hand, guided by a marvellous accuracy of eye, and an untiring zeal in the promotion of the great work of education. We, therefore, find that the text or script, whether enshrined within ornamental and elaborate borders or not, was executed with a care and perfection not to be surpassed by the most carefully cast type. The letters of this beautiful script were those introduced by St. Patrick to our country. They were the letters used in Rome in his day; and so in our own time the text is known as Roman text. They are round in form and moderately large in our earliest manuscripts. But in the course of a few centuries a modification of form is noticeable. The letters are reduced in size and become angular in form. This modification is particularly noticeable in the "Book of Armagh." And from that form of Irish script there has been hardly any departure to the present day. Through the untiring energy of O'Curry and other scholars we have very many examples of this style of penmanship. And judging by these specimens we are naturally amazed at the neatness and delicate accuracy by which the letters are formed, and the harmony of line in each page, which seems to surpass the best printed pages of our day. We seldom meet with an erasure in the text; yet the men by whom this great work was accomplished sought no other reward than that afforded them by the consciousness of labouring to promote the glory of God and the honour of their country.

Beautiful as the script or penmanship to which I have referred really is, the decorative borders in which the script of each page is enshrined, constitute the chief distinctive features of our illuminated manuscripts.

Here colour and design combine to command our surprise and admiration. And when you examine those ornamental borders within which their several pages are enshrined, you can easily see that amongst their varied designs those known as the "*interlacing patterns*" constitute one of the chief features of Celtic design; and of this interlacing work there may be several different patterns even in the same page. But besides those interlacing patterns, we find there are several other distinctive and beautiful designs commonly used. There are those known as the "devergent spiral" or "Trumpet pattern," which our experts regard as the only artistic ornament we owe to our pagan ancestors. All, however, admit that this form is highly artistic. There is another pretty design known as the "*Troquetera*," which is found frequently, perhaps constantly, in those pages.

Then as straight or parallel lines are generally used to limit or indicate the outline of the decorated spaces our scribes found that the "pellet" and "spiral" ornament could be used with effect. The artistic designs of our early illuminated manuscripts, so numerous and varied, are so arranged as to blend into a general outline that is at once harmonious and beautiful. At first sight it might appear in the case of interlacing ornament, that its flowing lines were drawn at haphazard, and without regard to special design or accuracy of curve. Yet each design can bear the closest examination without revealing the slightest inaccuracy of line or curve as you trace them through their intricacies till at last they gradually fade from the human eye. Even then they can be followed with the aid of a magnifying glass, and reveal the same accuracy till they fade into space.

In those ornate and elaborate designs a strange

variety of animal forms is also introduced and constitutes another noteworthy feature of our early art. Serpents, lizards and birds with grotesque heads and strange claws and elongated bodies are very noticeable in the intricacies of those endless interlacings. But the human form is rarely represented in any of those wonderful borders. In one of the most beautiful pages of the "Book of Kells," however, the face of Our Lord occupies the centre of the page, while the artist seems to exhaust the resources of his genius in the richness and variety of the designs which form its setting.

Foliated and flower patterns are prominent features in the illuminated manuscripts of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. But in those of Ireland of the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries they are but slightly in evidence. The only flower specially noticeable in them is one with which we are not familiar. It resembles a star, and would be like a daisy with its yellow centre removed.

Remarkable as the artistic drawing of these beautiful designs undoubtedly is, it is not more wonderful than their colouring; and all will admit that it is in the harmonious combination of drawing and colouring that we can trace true art. The perfection of this combination of design and colouring shown in our early manuscripts has won the admiration of European artists. Art critics of eminence from England, France and Germany with one voice give them the first place in all the world.

Such a statement may sound to some as an exaggeration; but its value can be and has been tested. We can easily see splendid specimens of the finest illuminated work in the museums of our European capitals. They may be seen in Rome, in Paris and

Vienna. They have been purchased regardless of cost, and are preserved as priceless treasures. Yet we have it on authority that our "Book of Kells" is the most beautiful amongst them all, though composed six hundred years earlier than most of them.

Our inquiry justifies a study of the general features of the colouring of those beautiful works. We find that yellow, red, green, and violet were freely used. Black is also used but less frequently. It is also noteworthy that the peculiar tones found in the excavations of the Palatine and Pompeii are noticeable in their pages. In these soft and mellow tones there is a striking contrast between them and the illuminated works of the Middle Ages, in which amongst light colours the sparkle of silver and gold are much in evidence. This is especially true of the Oriental manuscripts preserved in the British Museum, which mostly show a ground work of gold. But in our early illuminated work neither gold nor silver is used as a medium of colour. Indeed, the tests of chemical experts have proved that no metallic compounds have been used either for the script or colouring of our early manuscripts. In the "Book of Armagh" the colours are yellow, red, green, and black. In the "Garland of Howth" the colours are green, red and yellow. In the "Psalter of Recemavelo" the colours are similar—red, yellow and green. In a manuscript preserved at Nuremberg the colours are green, red, yellow, and violet.

But to reduce these various colours to harmony was a difficulty which could be solved only by the talent of artists. And our artists at that remote period were independent of foreign influence, so it appears that as art forms were the outcome of native Irish genius, so, too, the colours used were the creation of

native labour and ingenuity. Venerable Bede throws some light on the origin of the colours used, which have retained their richness and their softness of tone in spite of the destructive influences of fourteen hundred years. He tells us they were extracts from certain shellfish, such as mussels and cockles, by some process long since lost to science. The parchments were also prepared in Ireland and by Irish hands.

To those interested in the general features of our early art treasures I can have no doubt that a brief sketch of their contents, and of the history of their preservation may also prove interesting.

We have already pointed out that the completion of the "Book of Kells" is attributed to St. Columba himself, who combined so many special features in his own personality. He was a *prince*, a poet and an artist. He was one of the great apostles of Irish monasticism and wrote a rule for the guidance of the monks, which survives to our day. He was a saint whose sanctity commands the veneration of Irishmen throughout the world even in our own time.

This remarkable work is a copy of the gospels, and the opening words of the first page are those of the beginning of the Gospel of St. Matthew, "*Liber generationis Christi.*" It would seem as if the artist decided to put forth in this opening page all his powers to invest those initial letters of the sacred text with the choicest designs of Celtic art. Those exquisite designs form the subjects of the six first pages of the book, and are acknowledged by all to be the most beautiful examples of illumination in the manuscript. In the third of those pages we have the face of the Divine Redeemer enshrined in the most artistic setting that Irish art has ever produced. This art treasure has been fittingly described as "*the unapproachable glory of Irish*

illumination." It is now preserved in Trinity College, Dublin.

The "Book of Durrow," said to have been written in the Columban monastery of Durrow, King's Co., is also attributed to St. Columba. The style of illumination is similar to that of the "Book of Kells," but in the opinion of Miss Stokes and some others it is inferior in beauty of execution. It contains the usual and touching request of the scribe or artist for a prayer; and the name of the scribe attached is that of St. Columba, "who have myself written this gospel in the space of twelve days by the grace of God." It is but a fragment of the gospel; but it was held in great veneration by our early Irish Church, so much so that it was placed in a beautiful silver shrine by Flan, the son of Malachy, king of Ireland, A.D. 876–916. MacGeoghegan in his well-known compilation, "The Annals of Clonmacnoise," speaks of a strange property peculiar to this book of Durrow, and also to the other manuscript copies written by St. Columba. "It was," he writes, "that if any of them had sunk to the bottom of the deepest waters they would not lose one letter or sign or character of them, which I have seen tried partly myself on that book of them which is in Durrow, in the King's Co.; for I saw the ignorant man that had the same in his custodie, when sickness came on cattle, for their remedie put water on the Book and suffer it to rest therein; and saw cattle return thereby to their former state, and the book receive no loss." This celebrated work is now preserved in Trinity College, Dublin.

The "Book of Dimma" is also a copy of the gospels and has his signature affixed at the end of St. Matthew's Gospel—with the usual humble petition for a *prayer* and a *blessing*. It is said to have been written in St.

Cronan's Abbey at Roscrea, where it was long preserved. It was enshrined in the year A.D. 1150 by Hateus, Chief of Ely O'Carroll. The shrine or cover was of brass, plated with silver, and artistically inlaid with lapis lazuli. The shrine, with the precious manuscript disappeared, in the sixteenth century, and not again seen till the year 1780, when it was discovered under a pile of stones on the Devil's Bit mountain. The discovery was not the fruit of the labours of the learned, or the antiquarian of the time; but was effected by some mischievous boys who were engaged in hunting rabbits on the mountain side. On one side of the cover the boys found a striking representation of the crucifixion, which, through a feeling of reverence, they left untouched. The gleam of the lapis lazuli on the other side was too much for their curiosity, and accordingly they ruthlessly tore it from its ancient setting. It soon after came into the possession of Dr. Harrison, of Nenagh, and after passing through several hands it was at last purchased for the Trinity College Library, Dublin.

The "Book of Armagh" is later by a few centuries than those just referred to. Its date is given as A.D. 807. The death of its gifted writer is recorded by the Four Masters under date 844 in the following laudatory terms: "Ferdomhnach, a wise man and a distinguished scribe, of Ard Macha, died." We have already referred to some special features of its beautiful penmanship. Dr. Reeves refers to it as "of extreme elegance and as admirable throughout for distinctness and uniformity." And its other artistic features are regarded by some critics as equal if not superior, to the "Book of Kells."

This book is one of the most valued treasures of our early Irish Church; and stands "without a rival in the whole range of literature." It contains a copy of

the New Testament, probably the oldest that has reached us from our early Church. It contains also our oldest and most authentic life of our national apostle, and a life of St. Martin, of Tours. His confession, his canons, and his letter to Coroticus are also contained there. Surely such a book, as Dr. Reeves concludes, "has just claims on the attention of all patriots." As a compilation of the many historical documents in connection with St. Patrick's career, we are told by Mr. Bury, of Cambridge, that its pages are the "*most important sources of the life of St. Patrick.*" And Dr. Healy speaks of it as "*the most authentic and venerable of all our ancient historical books.*" We are informed by the Four Masters that it was enshrined by Donough, son of Flan, king of Ireland, A.D. 937. And when Brian Boroimhe visited Armagh as supreme King of Ireland, A.D. 1006, it was in the "Book of Armagh" that he recorded his guarantee, and that of the Southern Kings, of the ecclesiastical privileges of the Primatial See. The entry is in the writing of Brian's faithful secretary, "Calbus Perennio" or Maolsuthain.

We are informed by Dr. Reeves that this extraordinary book was pledged by Francis Moyer in 1680 for £5. In 1707 a Mr. Arthur Browlow, of Lurgan, became its owner; and it remained in that family till November, 1853, when it was purchased by Dr. Reeves for £300. In 1858 it was secured by the Protestant Primate for the same sum on the condition that it should be placed for safe custody in Trinity College Library, where it is now preserved.

There are several others of those early sacred and artistic treasures happily still preserved in Ireland which would deserve special reference, such as the "Stowe Missal," the "Book of Devenish," and many

more. But limitations of space make this impossible here. Those to which we have referred and the several others happily preserved in Ireland show that in the early ages of our history those priceless works were very numerous. But the preservation of those that remain is equally strange and fortunate when we remember that plunder and ruin were the chief features of our country's life for centuries. When referring to their artistic features I have used terms of praise which may seem to some to be exaggerated or unauthorised. But those statements are supported by our highest authorities on such subjects. Dr. Joyce and Miss Stokes, and Petrie and Romilly Allen reflect the opinion of Dr. Hyde already quoted. We find the same opinion supported by eminent scholars and artists of other lands. Their praises reach us from Germany and France; and are offered in no stinted or ungenerous terms by English writers of eminence. Mr. J. D. Westwood says "Ireland may justly be proud of the 'Book of Kells.' This copy of the Gospels, traditionally said to have belonged to St. Columba, is unquestionably the most elaborately executed manuscript of early art in existence." And he adds that from "the fifth to the sixth century, the art of ornamenting manuscripts had attained a perfection almost miraculous in Ireland."

Mr. Digby Wyatt states "we freely confess that in the practice of art, at least, the Irish appear in advance, both in mechanical execution and in originality of design, of all Europe."

Dr. Ferdinand Keller praises the "sound judgment of the artists," and goes on to say that "the fineness, sharpness and elegance of execution, borders on the incredible."

Dr. Waagen, a German, writing on the same subject,

says, "the ornamental pages, borders and initial letters exhibit such a variety of beautiful and peculiar designs, so admirable a taste in the arrangement of colours, and such an uncommon perfection of finish that one feels absolutely struck with amazement."

If I may add another name to the many who offer the tribute of their admiration to the beauty of our early illuminated manuscripts, that shall be the name of Gerald Barry, the most unscrupulous of all the enemies of Ireland. He was court historian under Henry II on the occasion of his so-called "conquest" of our country and its people. Yet even he has only words of enthusiastic praise for our early illuminated manuscript treasures.

"Amongst all the miraculous things of Kildare," he wrote, "nothing surprised me so much as that wonderful book said to have been written from the dictation of an Angel in St. Bridget's own time. . . . But on close examination the secrets of art are evident, and so delicate and subtle, so laboured and minute, so interwoven and knotted, so intricately and brilliantly coloured, that did you perceive them you were ready to say they were the work of an Angel, not of a man. The more intently I examined them, the more was I filled with fresh wonder and amazement."

Who can dwell, if only for a moment, on those peerless relics of our early native art without an enhanced feeling of pride in the achievements of our race and nation.

IRELAND'S MILITARY HISTORY

THE history of a nation is the history of its most illustrious sons, and is readable and attractive in proportion to the genius, ability, and originality displayed by the guardians of their country's fortunes. Success, either political or permanent, is also a prominent factor in determining the place that leaders of a Nation's struggle for entity or conquest will hold in the estimation of the masses. It needs a master mind to turn to good purpose the units that compose a nation—to weld them into one harmonious whole, to fire them with a common purpose, to impress upon them a single individuality, and under cover of personal devotion to exact that rigid discipline and strict obedience without which military renown is impossible of attainment. Such were Caesar for Rome and the Empire of the West, Napoleon for France and Europe. Nor was their object war for war's sake only. Though militarism was the fount and basis of their unlimited power, they did not neglect the material interests of their respective peoples, but by sound and wise legislation laid each the foundations of a new civilization in centuries very far removed.

Ireland, from its insular position and its proximity to a powerful nation, should undoubtedly have had more regard to its maritime defence in the past, and should have, even at an early period, established the nucleus of a naval force capable of coping with any foreign combination. That she had not, was either a lack of foresight or was due to circumstances difficult to control. The many separate kingdoms into which

Ireland was divided under the loose overlordship of the Ard-righ, and the consequent provincial jealousy and intermittent strife, precluded the possibility of concerted measures against invaders from oversea: their excellent military organisation, moreover, made them over-confident of victory by land, and freed them from dread of foreign foes landing on their soil. Subsequent events, however, proved the unwisdom of their confidence, and though they succeeded under a king of surpassing ability in driving the invader from their shores, they were found sadly unprepared when more powerful warriors, though untrained seamen, effected a peaceful landing. It must ever remain a matter for just pride that when countless hosts bore down upon our isle, there was found a man within her shores, a host in himself, to rid his country of an intolerable burden, and teach the haughty invader that Irishmen, under an able leader, were capable of defending their own fair plains and of crushing even a powerful combination of allied foes. What Caesar did for Rome, Napoleon for France, was achieved for Ireland, perhaps in less dramatic manner, but none the less effectively, by Brian Boru. The issue was not so vast in Brian's case—the salvation of his island home—neither was his ambition so great, bounded as it was by the four shores of Erin. His genius for organisation, for inspiring his followers with his own personality, the dominant will that brooked no opposition, his dream, all but effected, of centralising the rule of the nation, mark him out as one of the prominent figures of history, and make us wonder what he might have achieved had his field of operations been wider. The steady progress of the petty prince of Kincora to the coveted throne of Tara, his dogged perseverance in attaining the chief object of his life, the strong will that subdued

to their own amazement, powerful princes and brought them beneath his banner, recalls to mind the transformation of the Corsican lieutenant into Emperor of the French.

Internecine warfare does not possess much interest for the student of history: the issues ot stake are petty and often degrading, the actual contest is generally in the nature of a surprise and marauding incursion. For some centuries after the death of Brian Boru, there was no warfare in Ireland on an extensive scale: each kingdom seemed determined only on preserving its own integrity, on increasing its own power, to the detriment of its neighbour, while the common enemy was not only suffered to secure a firm footing in the country but was even assisted in maintaining it in return for some temporary advantage to one or other of the many chiefs who bordered on the Pale. There can be no gainsaying the fact that this period is one of the saddest in our annals—sadder even than the eighteenth century, when the phantom of extinction hovered over the land, and it seemed as if the history of the Gael were closed for ever. To the North belongs the credit of breaking the dark spell: the occasion was critical in the extreme, but it called into action the military genius of Hugh O'Neill, whose phenomenal and unexpected success roused the drooping spirits of his countrymen, and were it not for the latent jealousy and innate pride of the southern chiefs, would have been the forerunner and herald of the country's freedom. That fortune proved unkind in the repulse at Kinsale, must not be placed to the discredit of Hugh O'Neill, who, in the opinion of historians, would have effected single-handed what he failed to effect under the compulsion of confederates.

The mantle of Hugh O'Neill descended to his grand-

nephew, Owen Roe. Circumstances had changed considerably in the half-century that separated their glory—the steady growth of English power in Ireland rendered the task of Owen far more arduous. Fettered though he was by the Anglo-Irish nobility, and mixed though the issue was by the Parliamentary war in England, alone and unaided, the victor of Benburb not only defended his patrimony in the north, but was hailed by general acclamation as the custodian of his country's honour, the restorer of her rights and liberties. No name, perhaps, is held in higher esteem by succeeding generations than Owen Roe. In the truest sense of the word, he is a great national hero. Ever victorious in the field of battle, humane, honourable, yet withal of a retiring and unassuming disposition, his is such a character as would win the sympathetic affection and rapturous applause of a generous and soft-hearted people. That adverse fortunes should have dogged his steps, too, and exposed him, as is supposed, to the ruthless assassin, must ever remain a source of deepest regret while we cherish a secret thought that our history would have taken another course and our liberty be assured, had the prudent, cautious, far-seeing Owen been spared to complete his task.

Another half-century rolls by, ere Erin attempts to burst the shackles of her thraldom, but how different the *role* she plays, how scarce deserving our admiration! No longer ostensibly striving for separate nationality, but choosing the part of a worthless monarch against the avowed champion of her bitterest foes. Yet reflection may justify the action. Devoid of arms and ammunition, of trained soldiers and money, she would fain seek the lesser of two evils, and, true to Celtic temperament and sentiment, espouse the weaker cause. And yet we all look back on that campaign with un-

concealed pride and pleasure, for has it not burned into our hearts the magic name of Sarsfield? That the victor of many a field in Belgium, the sturdy stormer of many an almost impregnable fortress, the stout heart that suffered many a repulse, but never knew defeat, was checked by the rotten walls but strong arms of Limerick, speaks volumes for the martial spirit of the hunted remnant of the Irish race and the intrepidity and genius of their leader.

Alas! the curtain falls on Ireland's martial glory. If we would seek for further proof of the prowess of her sons, we should find it on the battlefields of Europe. Under many a flag they shed lustre on the land of their birth—many a field has drunk their blood and proclaimed their glory. As Irishmen they crossed the sea: as Irishmen they live in history. Side by side they fought in battle: side by side they recalled their valorous deeds. Merged in a mighty nation's troops, they still retained their native tongue, their love of home, their country's hate, their father's pride; true to the *fleur de lys* they gloried more in that perpetual link which binds them to Erin, in that honoured title which rings through the pages of history—the Irish Brigade.

With a feeling of reluctance, yet buoyed up by a generous nation's memory, we turn to the last sad scene in the martial drama of Erin. We think not of success or lasting fame, we look not for staid veterans tried in many a field, we boast no serried ranks, nor proud flags waving on to glory—no! we see but the ill-accoutred masses of a countryside on march and read in their grim set faces the pent-up feelings of their lacerated hearts; we turn aside in silent sympathy from those primitive weapons worthless even in brawny arms to put into execution the deter-

mination that consumes them—we nerve ourselves to witness the sharp and final struggle, and, as after a mighty strain, relax, with cheeks softly bedewed with tears, with breasts heaving gently from new-found joy, for they have won a nation's brightest crown—Death without Dishonour.

We cannot claim that the campaigns enacted in Ireland are of great importance for the student of the art of war: the comparatively small number of men handled, and in later times, the deficiency in the most approved weapons of the period, the non-existence of a regular standing army properly trained and equipped, the frequency of petty skirmishes in which skill availed little and success tended to develop a false confidence, the long intervals between regular pitched battles, are quite sufficient to disprove our claim to high military distinction. Such, however, might be expected from the sparse population of Ireland, and more so from the mixture of race after the Anglo-Norman invasion, which, as facts prove, rendered national cohesion and union exceedingly difficult. However, treating the question absolutely, even a cursory perusal of Erin's history will convince us that her sons not only displayed marked courage in the field of battle but exhibited an enthusiasm which sharpened their blunt weapons at home and was the envy of their fellow-soldiers in foreign lands. There were leaders, too, worthy of the dauntless spirit of the rank and file—men who in other armies and in other circumstances might take a place in the world's history. Want of discipline, rather through necessity than choice, lack of funds and the evil tradition of centuries have probably been the most potent check to our armies' success, our chieftains' glory. Yet such is our Gaelic temperament, we are more proud, vainly

perhaps, of our national heroes, than if they swept other lands with their armies, other seas with their fleets. They are our countrymen: herein lies our pride: this it is imparts an added interest to whatever they achieved, be it great or little. We know them by familiar names, we feel we inherit, if not their bravery, at least their chivalrous spirit; we tread the land they fought for, their battle-fields are in our midst. We still maintain the same hard struggle, yearning wistfully for the goal of liberty they sought. We have some just reason, too, for pride on their account: their patriotism is the more unsullied and pure in that they fought against hopeless odds: their self-sacrifice commands our admiration and stimulates us to emulation. We must not judge them by the world's standard of success, but rather by the spirit in which they faced their task, the absolute indifference to self their efforts implied. Read in this light, Irish military history must leave its impress on succeeding generations—will link them with the dead and honoured past, sharers in their glory, sympathisers with their woe, will inculcate the lesson of unity for the errors of other days, will inspire them with readiness to incur some risk and inconvenience for the common weal, and tend ultimately to the realization of our fondest hopes—a united Ireland.

A GAELICISED OR A SOCIALISED IRELAND—WHICH?

Thoughts Suggested by the Great Dublin Strike, 1912–13

THE object of this article is to place before the reader two contrasted pictures of Irish social life; a contrast between the sad actual and the glorious possible.

The working masses of Dublin have passed through a period of demoralisation that is certain to leave its mark on the present generation. And what affects large masses in the capital is sure to communicate itself eventually to the nation at large in a greater or less degree. Before coming, however, to speak of the changes the latest strike is bound to leave, let us premise a word on the clear distinction that must not be lost sight of between Socialism and Social Reform.

None of us who would not gladly welcome Social Reform, who does not desire to see the toiler uplifted and his lot made brighter. A priest's heart sinks at the daily pictures of squalor he has to encounter in the slums and tenement rookeries. There is no class that stands with cleaner hands than the clergy, especially the Irish priesthood. A few facts will show this.

To begin with the Pope. The late Leo XIII wrote an immortal work on the condition of Labour, a work that did more than any book of the century to break the fetters with which capital weighted the limbs of toil; he canonised a beggarman. His successor sprang from the masses, to them he has ever stretched out a father's hand and showed a father's heart. Look at the charity sermons organised in our city churches,

and listen to our priests, Sunday after Sunday, pleading with all the vehemence of their beings, the cause of the poverty stricken or the helpless; see the vast armies of men and women formed by the Church to tend the wants of the orphan, the fallen girl, the infirm and the blind; their lives devoted to tottering age and abandoned infancy.

Go back to our own history: When the crowbar brigade came marching in the wake of the famine it found the people prostrate, disorganised and uneducated. They had but one friend they could trust, one man on whom with fullest confidence they could rely: the priest. How he flung himself between the homes of the poor and the uplifted arm of the destroyer is a matter of history. When, forty years ago, the farmers of Ireland entered on the greatest bloodless revolution of the century they found themselves confronted with a terrible force: twelve thousand landlords, supported by a yearly rental of sixteen millions, and all the sympathy and arms of the Government. When facing that formidable array, to whom did they look for leadership? To the priest. He fought at their head, and after a quarter of a century of struggle carried their banner to victory. Even Parnell, in his last days, when no one could accuse him of undue prejudice in favour of the men he praised, declared that the battle of the Land League could never have been won without the priesthood. That the farmers are planted on the soil to-day with no ghost of a process server or bailiff to trouble their repose is mainly due to the clergy. To the man, then, that tells the Dublin masses that the priest invariably sides with the oppressor and is no friend of the toiler every page of our history gives the lie.

Again let it be repeated that Social Reform is one thing, while Socialism, with its anti-Christian propa-

ganda and history of ghastly ruin, is another and a very different thing indeed.

When the toilers in the field wanted Social Reform based on *justice* they naturally looked to the priest as a leader; but when the workers in the city wanted "Socialism" they sought other captains. They were right; for no priest could lend countenance to the gospel of loot and anarchy that was preached and cheered. While every Catholic must regard Socialism as an unmitigated curse, he should throw all the energy of his being into Social Reform, assisting to realise the glorious dream of Leo XIII and "restore society to a Christian basis," where the toiler will not only be treated with justice but with justice tempered with mercy and goodness; in a word, where man's dealings with his brother man will reflect the dealings of our common Father with us all. Having made the distinction between Socialism and Social Reform clear and definite, let us return to the main purpose of this paper.

Reflections Suggested by the Strike: (*a*) An entirely material concept of life, from which every idea of God, the soul, moral obligations, and even intelligence was carefully eliminated, was constantly insisted on. A full stomach was put before the people as the one thing in life worth striving for—the next life did not count. There was no appeal made that rose higher than the breast-bone. Muscle, they were told, was the only force that counted in this world. In a word, Jumbo was set up as a new divinity for Irish Catholics to worship. Yet this flattered the workman's pride; it impressed him with a new sense of his importance; the one force on which he relies—his strength—was extolled by the speakers till he discovered a value in himself until then undreamt of. Now, when an orator succeeds in flattering a mob to the full bent of their

vanity, he can get them to swallow the wildest theories as we shall see. Socialism has two sides, an intellectual one, where it will not stand five minutes' examination, and an emotional one that affords an unrivalled vantage ground from which a demagogue may play on the passions of the mob; this has been used to the fullest during the strike. Let us take a sample:

Arguments based on the fallacy that muscle is the only force that contributes towards wealth production were heard on every side. Speakers inflamed the crowd to madness by enlarging on the comforts of the rich—their motors, cigars and champagne—and then dramatically asked: "Where did all this money come from? From your sweat." Frenzied cheers hailed those declarations as if they were gospel truth.

The fallacy that ignores intellect, capital, foresight, enterprise, the genius of organisation, and the whole array of moral and intellectual forces that daily play such a conspicuous part in wealth production, and points to brute strength as the one and only source, had a thousand changes rung upon it till it passed current without a suspicion of its hollowness. The purpose of this paper is not to refute the errors of Socialism, but this is too tempting to pass without at least a pin-prick. The two elements in muscle are strength and agility. But if muscle be the only force worth counting, what a sorry place man holds in the scale of creation; for in strength a cart horse is his master ten times over, and in agility an ordinary flea in average healthy condition can jump higher than the world's champion. I wonder did it ever dawn on the speakers who shouted the omnipotence of Jumbo that they were degrading themselves and their hearers below the level of the common cart horse, and proclaiming the superiority of the flea.

Contrast the low estimate of man, as conceived in the Socialist mind, with the dignity accorded him by the simple definition of the catechism: "Composed of a body and soul and made to God's likeness"—not made inferior to two animals neither reputable nor respectable. The teaching that demands that I should ignore Shakespeare and raise my hat to the hod-man; that I should refuse honour to Edison and bow to the coal-heaver, need only be stated to have it smothered in ridicule. There let it lie.

(*b*) Another feature that makes swiftly for nationa debasement is that the worst passions of our nature, and these alone, were appealed to: pride, cupidity and selfishness. The gospel of discontent, open and undisguised, was accepted. Every man with a pound in his pocket was a "bloated capitalist" to be hunted down like a wild beast. The upright spiritualised Irishman for the time disappeared, and all of the brute that was in him was drawn out and fed.

(*c*) But the crowning shame remains to be told. When English Socialists succeeded in filling the heads of Irish workmen with half-baked paganism, as a reward and a tie on their future allegiance, they proceeded to fill their stomachs with bread. They would not only load a ship but an armada if by so doing they could loosen the strong hold Christianity has upon our people. The sight of what was once a proud and self-respecting people, whose grandfathers gladly died on the roadside rather than accept the poorhouse taint, crunching the beggar's crust thrown by English Socialists, at a time when most of them could earn good wages, and the richest harvest Ireland saw for years lay on the ground—that sight was about the most sickening spectacle witnessed in Ireland in our generation.

(*d*) Should the poison plant of Socialism ever take

root here, all that is beautiful in Irish national character must wither. The cheerful, sunny nature, the hopeful outlook on life, that buoyed our hearts and lighted our path through the darkest sorrows of the past, is doomed. Those social traits that make an Irishman such a charming companion and a welcome guest in every circle will fall blighted under its shadow. Who ever met a cheerful Socialist? His abiding disposition is moroseness; the tooth of despair for ever gnaws his heart strings; he is filled with hate for every man who chances to have more of this world's comforts than himself. Then the sparkle of Irish wit, the sunshine of happy contentedness will give place to the glare, the scowl and the choked curse.

The Last Opportunity.—We have here but merely touched on the disfigurements inflicted on our national life by the latest social upheaval; and what a sad picture to contemplate. But in that picture the thoughtful man sees the strongest argument yet made on behalf of the Gaelic Revival. It is in the hideousness of the disease we realise to the full the blessedness of the antidote. For the first time Ireland has a concrete example of how the two civilisations, Gaelicism and Socialism, mutually repel and antagonise each other at every point. The greedy crunching of the begged crust, the low animal standards, the acceptance of foreign doctrines that have blasted every country wherein they have found even a partial footing, the leaning on the outsider for food for both head and stomach, all this constitutes everything the Gael loathes and reprobates. To any man who wished to see the very antithesis of the dream of Gaeldom, Dublin during the strike presented it.

For the past twenty years the Gael has been crying —oftentimes a voice in the wilderness—for help to

beat back the Anglicisation he saw dragging its slimy length along. The immoral literature, the smutty postcards, the lewd plays and the suggestive songs were bad, yet they were mere puffs from the foul breath of paganised society. The full sewerage from the *cloaea maxima* of Anglicisation is now discharged upon us. The Gael called on Ireland to rise and save herself from the wrath to come. She did not rise and the wrath has come with a vengeance. When the President of the Gaelic League appealed for help "to beat back the foul demon of Anglicisation that threatened to devour us," his language was voted inflated rhetoric, or at best the outburst of a visionary. Judea was not the only land to stone her prophets. Will those who then smiled mild contempt question one word of that description now?

But you will say: Did we not at least fight the unclean literature? I never looked on that war as either final or effective. The central defect was, it was not radical; it mistook effect for cause. What was the good of seizing English papers at the railway station while the Irish palates along the streets craved for them? Had all our energies been converged on Gaelicising and thereby curing the diseased palates, in a short time, demand regulating supply, the number of English papers coming to Ireland need not trouble us. To snatch a bottle from a man drinking himself to death is at best but a temporary remedy. Fight the disease within him, that demands that bottle; destroy the alcoholic craving in his system; wrestle with the evil on its native soil, then the cure is final.

The place to deal effectively with evil literature is not in the street but in the Gaelic classes. There a healthy appetite is created that produces a nausea for tainted thought, and relishes all that is high and

pure. In the Gaelic League we possess the one natural weapon that constitutes our hope for a clean and spiritualised Ireland. Had we taken off our coats in downright earnestness ten years ago, taught the people to be self-reliant and self-respecting, placed the lofty standards of Gaeldom before them and infused into the rest of Ireland the enthusiasm that enabled the pastor of Trillick to regenerate his parish in six years, the sad spectacle of to-day would be impossible. Had we erected a Catholic library and established a branch of the Gaelic League in every parish; with these two engines alone, worked with all the motor force that fiery zeal in a holy cause can generate, we would have placed an angel sentinel with a flaming sword at the entrance to every avenue that leads to Ireland's heart; and the slush of Anglicised filth now flowing over and engulfing us would be sternly met by a wall of brass.

The torturing question to-day is: Are we now too late? Two civilisations alone now lie before us. The day for the piebald compromise, the contemptible old makeshift, is passed for ever. At Ireland's feet are two paths—a path of light, and a path of darkness. Let her choose, but let her choose quickly, for the sands of time are running out. The issue is clear cut and definite—Gaelicised or Socialised Ireland. Which? Shall Gaelic Ireland perish and a godless monstrosity rise in its place? If the living spectacle of the cesspool into which Anglicisation has at last dragged us cannot arouse every self-respecting Irishman to throw all the energies of his heart and brain into the revival of the white spiritualised civilisation of our fathers then there is danger ahead for Catholic Ireland.

THE STUDY OF IRISH HISTORY

HISTORY is defined as a prose narrative of past events, as probably true as the fallibility of human testimony will allow. It is not a poetic narrative, for poetry appeals to the imagination, while the historian though using his imagination, must write of hard facts, must not allow his feelings to colour his views or dominate his judgment, and he must beware of exaggeration and invention to which poetry so easily lends itself. History however is something more than a mere chronicle of events, however important, set down in due sequence. It ought to be a living narrative, not a mere skeleton, for the historian is writing the biography of a nation, and of a nation which, having emerged from barbarism, has attained to some degree of civilization.

Professor Freeman describes history as the science or knowledge of man in his political character; but history has a wider significance than this. A nation's activities are not confined exclusively to the senate house and to the battle field; a nation's story is not read in its entirety in treaties or in statute books. There is, besides, its social life to be taken into account, the everyday life of the castle and the cabin; there are the classes into which the people are divided, the character of their houses, and even their food and clothes, the educational system which they have adopted, the faith which they profess; in general, the manner in which they live, move, and have their being.

No man can know all history, for the field is too vast for a single mind; but every student ought to

know something of general history, for it tells the story of the evolution of the human race. He ought to know especially how it happened that some nations have prospered and how others have failed, how development and progress were aided by soil and climate, how one land became the nursery of freemen and another the nursery of tyrants and slaves. But while it is well, if we want to learn from the past the lessons which the past has so abundantly to give, that we should study and master the history of many nations, after all, the history of our land has the first claim upon us. For every man loves, and ought to love, his own land best of all.

In pagan Ireland the Druids had well nigh a monopoly of learning, and therefore such historical knowledge as there was was possessed by them, and such historical writing as there was was done by them. Afterwards historical writing passed into the hands of the bards, and to them succeeded the annalists or historians, who sometimes threw their historical compositions into poetic form, the object of this being that these writings might be the more easily remembered. These historians were among the privileged classes, with recognised official positions in each clan, a residence and lands assigned to them, and a place of high honour reserved for them in all assemblies. Their training was long and arduous, for a historian should know all about chronology, antiquities and genealogies; he should know the prerogatives, rights and duties of the kings of Ireland, and of his own chief in particular; and if he did not know all these things he was not entitled to "visitation or sale of his compositions." As an original authority he wrote of contemporary events, and he copied faithfully and accurately the accounts left by his predecessors; and to ensure perfect

accuracy, if that were possible, and so far as it was possible, his written records were publicly read at the Feis of Tara, or in the lesser assemblies, and if error had crept into what he had written, it was corrected.

What historical writings there were in pagan Ireland we have no means, at least no adequate means, of knowing; but in Christian times there were genealogies, annals, historical tracts, and lives of the saints, and there were so many of these that the Irish of the eighth century were accustomed to boast of "the hosts of the books of Erin." In the destruction which overwhelmed both bardic and monastic schools during the Danish wars a large proportion of these books disappeared. Some were burned by the Danes, some were thrown into water and drowned and were thus destroyed for ever, not a few were carried abroad and were buried in foriegn monasteries to be entirely forgotten, or perhaps recovered after the lapse of centuries as was Adamnan's "Life of Columba." And it may be that others will yet be recovered, or copies of them, when foreign libraries shall have been sufficiently explored. Not all the Irish books, however, were burned, or carried abroad, or drowned, for a few at home escaped the general wreck, such as the "Book of Leinster," the "Book of Ballymote," the "Book of Lecain," the "Leabhar Breac," and many Lives of Saints. And with the triumph of Brian Boru over the Danes the old zeal for historical composition returned, and survived even the fall of Brian on the fatal field of Clontarf. How well equipped the writers of the period were for the work which they undertook we gather from the "Annals of Tighernach," in which the author shows an intimate acquaintance with Bede, Josephus, Orosius, St. Jerome, and all previous Irish

annalists, and not only quotes them but examines them with critical care.

With the Anglo-Normans evil times came, and if Fitzgerald and De Burgo plundered the Irish of their properties Gerald Barry robbed, or attempted to rob, them of their character. Coming in the guise of reformers and in the name of religion, these invaders kept no faith and observed no treaties. From their Norman castles which were but freebooters' strongholds, and it might be said even robbers' dens, they murdered the natives seized their lands, desecrated their churches, destroyed their monasteries and monastic schools. Even the Irish saints were often the subjects of their ridicule and their sneers, for Gerald Barry charges them with being of a vindictive temper, and in place of men like St. Laurence O'Toole and St. Malachy these Normans had bishops and abbots who were but courtiers and landed proprietors, and even warriors, much less at home in church than in the court or on the battlefield. It was not, of course, to be tolerated that any Irish historian should chronicle *their* acts in detail, and hence in the Statute of Kilkenny it was enacted that Irish story tellers who came into the Anglo-Irish quarters were not to be encouraged or employed, and whoever encouraged or employed them was liable to be imprisoned.

The question of religion had not then arisen to divide, for Irish and Anglo-Irish were of the same faith. Henry II pretended to be a pious Catholic ; Strongbow, as a pious christian, was buried in Christ Church ; of the legislators at Kilkenny all were Catholics and some were Bishops ; and, advancing two hundred years, it was under the Catholic Mary that English planters were brought over from England to the King's and Queen's counties, and that, to make place for

them, the O'Connors were driven from Offaly, and the O'Mores were driven from Leix. But undoubtedly the relations between Irish and English became embittered with the advent of religious differences. The plantations of Elizabeth and James, entailing the dispossession of so many Catholics with all its attendant horrors; the Cromwellian Settlement which was really a fresh uprooting of the Catholic occupiers, and finally the broken Treaty of Limerick, and the long dark, dreary night of the penal laws served, each in turn, to sow the seeds of bitterness and hate in Catholic minds. And the Protestants on their side recalled the alliance of the Irish Catholics with Spain, the enemy of England, the proscriptions of James II's Parliament, and, more than all, the Protestant lives lost and the Protestant property destroyed in the rebellion of 1641.

History written under the influence of such bitter recollections was nothing more than an advocate's plea. It could not be, indeed, did not pretend to be impartial. On the one side we have men of the English interest such as Moryson and Davies and Spenser and Camden following in the footsteps of Gerald Barry, and copying his lies. On the other side we have Keating, a Catholic priest and persecuted outlaw, not likely in such circumstances to be impartial. John Lynch on the same side had a higher sense of what history should be; but, after all, his real object in writing was not so much to write impartial history as to confound Gerald Barry. And let it be added, to the honour of Galway, of which he was a native, that he did prove the Welsh priest to be a defamer who foully calumniated Ireland and her people. When Leland wrote in the eighteenth century the dawn of toleration had already come, and this is reflected in his writings. He had not either the learning or ability of his great co-religionist

Usher, but neither had he his fierce intolerance. For one of the things which every lover of learning will regret is that Usher's extraordinary abilities and extraordinary learning were so grievously disfigured by the worst prejudices of his time. In the pages of Mageoghegan on the Catholic side toleration appears, and I have often thought that this was due to the fact that he wrote abroad, far from the turmoil and bitterness so plentiful at home in his native land.

The softening down of race hatred and sectarian animosity, which commenced about the middle of the eighteenth century and which developed so rapidly towards its close, received a fatal check from the rebellion of 1798 and the passing of the Act of Union. The long struggle for emancipation, and the fierce war against tithes kept alive the hatred thus awakened, and the famine and the evictions which followed are bitterly remembered still. And passion and party spirit and class hatred have continued owing to the fight of the masses of the people against the Established Church and the fierce agrarian war of the last thirty years. Historians have often reproduced the passions and prejudices of the combatants on opposing sides; and while some continue to regard Pitt and Castlereagh as the incarnation of evil, others have made attempts to justify the Act of Union, though not always approving of the means by which it was carried. To the Catholics, O'Connell was the greatest of all Irish leaders, but to writers who copied the London *Times* he was the big beggarman, the foul-mouthed calumniator of England. Even Mr. Lecky doubts whether his services to Ireland were a blessing or a curse.

The strife of ages, however, seems nearing its close. We have not, indeed, yet arrived at a period when party spirit is dead. South of the Boyne one still

hears an occasional outburst from Nationalist platforms, something said which would be far better left unsaid, and north of the Boyne one hears the oratory of the Ulster Hall and of Sandy Row, and the loud beats of the Orange drum. Still, moderation has made great advances, and is having its recruits from both sides. An increasing number of Irishmen have become convinced that patriotism is a nobler thing than mere party spirit, and that nations and even parties do not prosper upon hate. The time has therefore come when our past history may be studied, not for the purpose of finding materials to be used by opposing factions in combat, but for the purpose of ascertaining the truth. In Irish history as in all history the first thing to be sought for is the truth, and if we must have the whole truth, as we ought to have, something has yet to be done. For instance, archæologists like Mr. Coffey and Professor Macalister, to mention only two, must wring their secrets from our ancient monuments. And perhaps in foreign libraries would be discovered copies of earlier manuscripts carried from Ireland in troubled times, which would tell more fully what ought to be known of pagan and early Christian times. This surely is a matter which might well engage the attention of a university named National, and which, as such, must aim at doing patriotic work.

Irishmen with English names must cease to copy the libels of Gerald Barry. For though they bear English names they ought to remember that the air they breathe is Irish, the sky above them is an Irish sky, the earth they tread is Irish, it is Irish blood which flows in their veins, and he is an unnatural son who will fling insults and contumely on his mother's name. On the other hand, those with purely Irish names ought to cease upbraiding the man with an English

name. They may in doing this be flinging stones at their ancestors, for Irish and English blood as the centuries rolled on have often flowed in a commingled stream. The Protestant seeking for the truth and nothing but the truth, will discover, as Lecky did, that there was no organised and deliberate massacre in 1641, though he will find that there were many and regrettable excesses on the Catholic side due to the persecutions and plantations of Elizabeth and James. Every fair-minded investigator, whether Catholic or Protestant, will condemn the Cromwellian Settlement and the massacres of Drogheda and Wexford, as he will the long drawn out agony of the penal laws. The honest historical student, no matter what his political opinions may be, assuming that he has any at all, will easily see the inherent defects of Grattan's Parliament, and if he wants to know why the famine came, let him read the life of Thomas Drummond and study the Devon Commission Report. I know it will be said that such subjects as the agrarian war of the last thirty years will be considered by many as too recent to furnish matter for written history at present. But let it not be forgotten that the contemporary historian is an original authority, and as such has his special value. Neither the contemporary history nor the ancient history of a country can be ignored; for there is a continuity in history, and events of the present day have their roots and causes in the recent as well as in the distant past. "History," says Lord Acton, "is a most powerful ingredient in the formation of character, and the knowledge of the past, the record of truths revealed by experience, is eminently practical as an instrument of action, and a power that goes to the making of the future."

There is, of course, no finality in Irish written history

no more than there is in Irish land acts. With the discovery of fresh material, historical judgments will need to be revised, and recent public events will, no doubt, wear a different aspect to those who will study modern Irish history when we ourselves shall have passed away. I am not a prophet, but it needs no gift of prophecy to see that even in the immediate future there will be in Ireland a great softening of ancient prejudice and factionist zeal. When that day comes, our history will be studied with greater care, and with greater interest and profit by every educated Irishman, it matters not to what party or creed he may belong. For men of different creeds and different politics may surely meet on the common ground of wishing to learn the history of the land in which they were born, and in the soil of which after life's fitful fever they hope to be laid to rest. Clinging to the political convictions which they hold, and to the faith in which they believe, they can all wish to be able to interpret the rath and mound, the broken arch and the ivy-clad ruin, the holy well with its rude votive offerings, the pillar stone by the wayside, the round tower upon which so much learning and ingenuity have been spent, the cyclopean fort whose grey old walls, unshaken after centuries, have flung back with contempt the persistent assaults of time and tide. The co-religionists of Usher may differ from the old Irish monks as greatly as Usher did and yet take pride in the character of their lives and works, in their patience, their industry, their energy, their zeal, in the buildings which they constructed, the learning which they acquired, the books which they wrote, the manuscripts which they illuminated, still to be seen, and still challenging the admiration of the world. For it is they who in dark ages, when learning was

driven from other lands, attracted foreign scholars to Irish schools, and made Ireland the light of Western Europe. The Catholic so long in bondage will gratefully learn that it was often a Protestant leader who fought for him, and a Protestant leader who helped to break his chains. The Protestant will realise that persecution does not generate conviction, and that in the work of conversion the methods of ascendancy and privilege must be replaced by milder methods. And when the battlefields of the past are examined by men of opposing creeds it will not be to recall the humiliation inflicted or the victory gained, but to point out that on this spot was made a gallant charge and a heroic resistance, and that on that other spot brave men fell as brave men ought. At a time when our race at home has so sadly dwindled I can see no nobler vision than this—that all Irishmen would come together to build up after so much has been pulled down, and thus help to shape a better and brighter future for Ireland, guided by the knowledge and warned by the experience of the past.

THE FAIR OF CARMAN

ABOUT two thousand years ago when, as we are told, an old chief, named Carman,[1] was dying on the shores of Loch gCarman, now known as Wexford Harbour, " they made his grave there, and he begged of them to institute a fair of mourning for him, and that the fair and place should bear his name for ever," and accordingly the Fair of Carman or Garmain was instituted and was held every third year from that time down to centuries after the Christian era. The Fair, although held at Wexford, was a provincial affair. It began on the Kalends of August and ended on the 6th. It was considered so important to hold this fair that in case the Leinstermen should ever neglect it, they were threatened with many evils, which Dr. Joyce in his most valuable book, " Social Ireland," enumerates, taking them from a poem in the " Book of Leinster." These evils were " early greyness, baldness, feebleness, kings without wisdom or dignified manners, without hospitality, without truthfulness." But if the Fair was duly held, they were promised various blessings—plenty and prosperity, corn, milk, fruit and fish in abundance, and freedom from subjection by any other province.

The Fair of Carman was a most representative assembly. The King of Leinster always presided, and there were present all the princes of the province. We read in an old account of it that there were present on one occasion forty-seven chiefs of the Province of Leinster : of these, sixteen were from Ui Kinnsealaigh,

[1] Another version represents Carmen as an Athenian lady.

eight from Dublin, twelve from Kildare, five from Leix, and six from Ossory. It will be interesting to know why they came together and what they did. We must first of all remember that these public assemblies such as were held in Wexford, Tara and other places, were divided into two chief parts, the "dal" or "aireacht" for political, legislative and judicial affairs and for the making and proclamation of laws and treaties; and the "aonach" or fair for commerce and pleasure. The object of the assembly was primarily to regulate the affairs of the Province, to make and reaffirm laws, to settle disputes, to vote supplies for war, or to make preparations against invasions; in fine, to do the business of a Provincial Parliament. At a certain hour each day these rulers met in conference to conduct their affairs and to regulate for the government of the province for the ensuing three years.

Besides the kings and chiefs, there also came to the Fair, soldiers, poets, historians, druids, musicians and women. The women held a special council of their own to discuss those matters that belong to their exclusive domain. Eoin MacNeill in his lecture, "Ireland before St. Patrick," thus graphically describes the women's assembly: "One of the largest stands is thronged with women, in rich and brilliant yet fastidiously simple dress, many of them wearing crescent-shaped plain diadems of gold over their heads, circlets of gold, plain or in simple and elegant design, around their necks; large elaborately-wrought golden brooches on the shoulder, and perhaps cinctures of gold around the waist. For beauty of complexion, of eyes, of features and of form, this assemblage of women excels anything that the outer world has ever seen."

Leaving the women to discuss their rights, and

the chiefs to settle their disputes, we hurry out to mix with the surging crowds who are keenly interested in the literary contests that formed a very important feature in the events of the Feis. There are competitions, with valuable prizes, for " every dan or art that was just or lawful to be sold or rewarded or exhibited or listened to," which included the recitation of poems and romantic tales, " a never-wearying entertainment," " stories of destructions, cattle preys, courtships, rhapsodies, battle odes, royal precepts, deep poetry "—all of which were listened to by large and applauding audiences. Musical contests were a very special feature. Prizes were offered for the best performances on the harp, timpan, trumpet, wide-mouthed horn, pipes, fiddle, castanet, and various other musical instruments. There were performers who delighted the crowds with feats of activity and skill on horseback such as we see nowadays at circuses. There were also showmen, jugglers and clowns who, with grotesque masks or painted faces, were making hideous distortions, all bellowing and roaring out their comic jests to the laughing crowds. Fortune-tellers mixed among the crowds, and champions performed all sorts of feats with weapons, balls and apples, which they threw up in the air and caught with wonderful dexterity.

The women, too, had their games, but beyond the fact mentioned—that the Leinster women had their games in the evening—we are not told what they were. In some of these national assemblies on the occasion of a Feis, match-making was a very important feature. " From all the surrounding districts the young people came with their parents," " bachelors and maidens being kept apart in separate places, while the fathers and mothers made matches, arranged the details, and settled the dowries. After this the couples were

married, the ceremonies being performed at a particular spot which was afterwards called the hill of the buying." No matches were made at the Fair of Carman, nor do we believe they are made at the Wexford Feis of to-day, although the introduction of this old custom might put a stir on the comfortable bachelors who are so numerous in County Wexford at present, and many of whom are active promoters of the revived Fair of Carman.

Enough has been said about the amusements and competitions, so we must now pass on to have a look around the market-place and see what is going on. Here are three markets—a market of food and clothes, a market of live stock and of horses, while a third was railed off for the use of foreign merchants who had gold and silver articles and fine raiment to sell. These merchants brought horses from France, gold and silver from Spain, gorgeous clothing from Greece, tin from Britain and rich fabrics of the loom from the shores of the Mediterranean. In exchange they took back cattle and hides and such like products of the land, for Ireland at that time was teeming with flocks and herds, milk and corn.

At the Aonach not only were there specimens of work for sale and for exhibition, but the arts and handicrafts were actually worked, and several articles were shown in the process of manufacture. A special place was allotted to the women, which was called "the slope of the embroidering women."

Very elaborate rules and regulations were framed to cope with the vast concourse of spectators, competitors and exhibitors. One or two regulations are deserving of special notice. The ancient accounts tell us that no quarrelling, fighting or unseemly disturbance was permitted under penalty of death, and all who were present at these assemblies were allowed to enjoy

themselves without fear of process-servers, landlords or agents. So free were these assemblies from disorderly conduct of any kind that an ancient writer boasted that the Gentiles of the Gael, *i.e.* the Irish Pagans, celebrated the Fair of Carman without breach of law, without crime or violence, or dishonour.

The Irish Pagans were of a religious turn of mind. Each day of the Fair was ushered in with solemn religious rites and ceremonies, but when Ireland became Christian the Pagan ceremonial was discontinued, and Christian ceremonies were introduced. Masses and adorations and the singing of hymns were celebrated each day.

Such, in brief, is the account of the ancient Fair of Carman, that was held for many centuries in Wexford town in the place now called "The Faythe," where, to all appearances, the traditions of the olden times fondly linger; for on the occasion of the Feis Carman of to-day, no part of old Wexford is so gaily decorated with flags and arches as The Faythe.

It is unnecessary to draw out at any length a comparison between the Ancient Fair of Carman and the Feis Carman of the Gaelic League of our day. They cover more or less the same ground. A few features might with advantage be introduced. In the olden times the Fair brought together all the learned and public men to discuss the questions of the hour. It should not at all be impossible now to hold conferences to discuss such questions as national education, the position of Irish in the schools, the industrial movement, and social questions. And there is no reason why on the occasion of the opening of the Feis there would not be religious celebrations in the churches in which Irish would be given the place of honour beside the official language of the Church.

WHAT IS THE GOOD OF IT?

I AM often asked, when urging the claims of the Irish language, what must be admitted to be a very practical question: What good has it done me—the Irish language and my desire to learn it? Well, this much at any rate, that it brought me back nearly every summer since to some locality in Irish-speaking Tirconnell where I have slaked my Irish thirst at those sparkling fountains of Irish life, among the kindly homes of Donegal.

What a contrast it is for a person like me to get away from the roar and bustle of a rushing city, from the rattle of the Orange drum and a sickening atmosphere of modern barbarity, and to find myself among the real Irish, natural and unspoiled, in their simple native dignity. Guide-books and travellers and superior foreigners who take a train-run through this country for the purpose of studying the Irish question on the spot—whatever that means—will tell you what an ignorant, unsophisticated boor the Irish-speaking peasant is. And wasn't it a sad state of affairs that up till recently we were prepared to accept the foreigners' verdict and to regard ourselves as an inferior, worthless, contemptible race? That is what we were educated into. And, saddest of all, there were some amongst ourselves—one meets them sometimes, though rarely, still—who never lost an opportunity of disparaging and sneering at their country and their countrymen. If there is anything low, mean, degraded and despicable in human nature, the lowest and meanest and most contemptible is the apish upstart who despises his

own. Beware of him; don't trust him; he is a dangerous criminal. Amongst the genuinely Irish there is nothing to be ashamed of and everything to be proud of: my readers know it as well as I do. I have found more real courtesy, more genuine politeness, refinement, that general something men call culture, in a hillside cabin with an earthen floor than ever I met with in a shoneen drawing-room. The people may be poor, but their poverty is not their own making. And they can claim this distinction over those who consider themselves their superiors that they are not victims of the affectation and tinsel show which make poverty a disgrace; nor do they stoop to swindling their neighbours for the purpose of concealing their penury. They never lose sight of the fact that there was, once upon a time, in a far off village called Nazareth, a humble home as poor as any of their own. This is a kind of a digression, but it is on points like these the spirit of the Irish Revival is extremely useful and necessary for correcting one's views. Apart from that, however, I believe I have derived the greatest personal advantage from the Irish language and the Irish Revival generally. I love the language because it is Irish, because it is my own. Through it I seem to come into living touch with the spirit of my native land, and almost to hear her heart throbbing. I feel that I am an integral part of the Ireland that has come down the centuries through good and through ill; and I believe I am a better man for the experience. I feel a thrill of pleasure through my soul in reading the exquisitely expressive pathos and passion which the Irish language naturally lends itself to, when I remember that this is the language, but little changed, that Patrick preached in, that Brigid prayed in, that Colum sang in; and I think I am a

better man for it. I feel aroused and impelled to action when I recollect that it was in this same language many an Irish general harangued his Irish troops, when by the power, the force and the subtleness of their native Gaelic, faces were set and muscles stiffened in the iron determination of men about to strike for their altars and their homes; and I believe it has a good effect on me. I feel proud that, notwithstanding all the handicaps, I can read with ease and appreciate with pleasure the language of my country, that I can converse, after a fashion, in my native tongue; and this, I think, helps to improve me. I am conscious that I can fling aside what the world has always regarded as the badge of slavery, the language of the conqueror; and I am convinced that it makes a better man of me. But first and above all, the Irish language brought me into living contact, as it were, with the Ireland of the past; it gave me a new and altogether different outlook on life, or rather should I say, it restored to me a life I never should have lost, and made me feel I was no longer a stranger in my own land.

It taught me concomitantly the magnitude of the devastation wrought in this country by the inroads of Anglicisation on Irish life. And with the knowledge came the conviction that, as an Irishman, it is my duty to do what I can, be it much or little, to turn back the tide which threatens to swamp the manliness, the faith, the morality—everything that is naturally or supernaturally good in me and my countrymen. To take but one instance: not only persons of education but even the ordinary man can realise what awful appalling havoc the abundance of evil literature in this country at the present time is calculated to produce. Now, we might as well try to stop the wind that blows across the moor as to withstand successfully

the inrush of this dirty torrent by means of speeches, lectures, declamatory denunciations, vigilance committees and what not, if something more solid and fundamental is not done. Work of that kind, praiseworthy undoubtedly as far as it goes, always appears to me to be on a parallel with preaching against public-houses for the purpose of promoting temperance. What is required is the creation of a new spirit amongst ourselves which will make us live again in the traditions of the past, which will bring us back again into real Irish life, as it was, and as it should be, and as it should never have ceased to be. If that life was anything, it was clean, highly religious, essentially Catholic. I know of no means to accomplish that end unless it be the Irish language with all that it entails, which is and ever must remain the centre and soul of the Irish Nation if the Nation is to live.

One great measure of our success in that work will be the extent to which we have helped to keep the people Irish, or make them still more Irish, or re-Irishise the Anglicised. All our history, and all observation, go to confirm that conclusion. You, reader, know the argument from history as well as I do; and you can test the contention by your own observation. Go into a locality that is still thoroughly Irish; go into a place where the people are becoming un-Irish or Anglicised; then obsérve those who have become West-Britons, and tell me candidly whether you do not notice a marked tendency towards infidelity. And would you not, reasoning *a-priori*, come to the conclusion that this is what you should expect to find. Our work is to hold, to tend, to foster and to cultivate what still remains, and, as far as in us lies, to undo the blunders of the past and remedy the evils of the present. A great deal cannot be done immediately—

the schools are point blank against us. But this is just all the more reason why we should put forth our best efforts to make the children's education as Irish, and consequently as Catholic, as we possibly can, for the children of to-day are the men and women of to-morrow. Here then is work, and noble work, to last a lifetime.

We hear a great deal, and are likely to hear a great deal more, of the necessity for the average priest of having a hobby—something he can turn to when time hangs heavy on his hands. It would be altogether unnecessary here to emphasise the truth of that necessity. We are all aware that the great majority of our priests are living in lonely country missions, and most of us must know that the lonely priest is the loneliest of all men: he cannot, unless in rare circumstances, engage in pastimes in themselves perfectly legitimate. And need I say that the *character sacerdotalis* does not restore to men the *donum integritatis* that mankind lost in the fall of Adam. But I see no reason why a man should perpetually find the time hanging. Some of us cannot find half enough time for the little we would like to do. I believe a priest in even the most remote country mission in Ireland could have a full programme for every day. There are the schools where the rising generation is being moulded and fashioned for good or for ill. There are the young minds opening to good and evil influences, capable of receiving indelible impressions; and there is no impression as lasting as the impression received from the priest. And a man might mix in worse company than that of pure, bright, intelligent, innocent Irish children. Through the children—and remember it is with the children every movement must start if it is to be lasting—we can do untold good for Ireland and at the same time—for

the work is one—for the religion of which we are the professed champions.

How is it to be done? By first and above all creating, if necessary, and cultivating in ourselves a thoroughly Irish spirit—and let me remark again, if there is anything evident in human affairs, it is that a thoroughly Irish spirit means a thoroughly Catholic spirit—and then *ex abundantia cordis* imparting that same spirit to those whom we may be able to bring under our influence. I know of no means to that end except the Irish language and all that it connotes. And for ourselves the spirit of the Irish Revival brings with it a long list of other virtues which will be always useful, and perhaps necessary in some day of stress.

Apart from the language as such, might not a man employ some part of his time in enlightening the people, old and young—the young especially—on Irish history? I do not mean the teaching of history after the dry wearisome fashion generally in vogue according to which history is taught somewhat like nursery rhymes; but, dividing the history of the country into five or six periods, to give general lectures on these, then to go over the ground again and again, each time particularising more than on the former occasion.

What about the Irish saints—the National apostle, the diocesan and local patrons at least? Would any foreigner unacquainted with the disastrous systems of education in Ireland believe the abyssmal depths of ignorance in this Catholic and Apostolic country in regard to the saints of Ireland. Surely here is work that clamours for execution. These are some of the things that await the young Irish priest. This is work that has been done here and there, is being done now, and he can do it. I will go further and say he must do it if he is to live up to what Ireland expects of him.

Would it be necessary for me to point out that we are now on the verge of one of the most eventful periods of all Irish history, no matter what happens Home Rule; a period pregnant with possibilities. Mighty forces are breaking forth which promise to transform the face of the land. And if we, the Irish priests, do not leap to the front and lead—well, we shall not find ourselves seated on the box when the triumphal car of the Irish Renaissance drives into Irish Ireland. The place our enemies would like to see us in would correspond to that reserved for captives behind the cars of returning Roman generals.

As far as citizenship is concerned, there is no special reason why we, priests, should bear the brunt of the battle; or why we should be singled out for special opprobrium, more than any other class, if we do not make the attempt, or if, having made the attempt, we fail. But you must take the world as you find it. You remember the forecast the Master made to His messengers before He sent them with ineffable gifts to mankind, how they were to expect only contradiction and calumny and persecution; nay, that the hour would come when those who would put them to death would consider that they did a service to God. But never lose sight of another simple sentence He spoke at a very solemn moment: "Have confidence," He said simply, even when the darkness and desolation of Gethsemane and Calvary were closing in around Him, "have confidence; I have conquered the world."

This is the world which tells us it is our duty to lead the van in every movement which presumably makes for social progress, and then blames us for bossing and bullying if we try to follow the dictates of our conscience and do our best. To any and every

man who hurls contradictions of that kind at my head, whether he be some superior foreigner who is pleased to constitute himself moral dictator to the Irish priesthood, or some would-be patriot who has discovered that mock patriotism can be made to pay, I reply that as long as I pay my share of the taxes I claim a right to a voice in the affairs of the State; and I claim the further right to resent with indignation the impertinence of any man, or woman either, who tells me it is my duty to move mountains in order to promote civic progress, and then piles vituperation on my head for having made an honest attempt to do what I cannot consider the Catholic clergy, any more than any other class of citizens in the community, bound to do.

Why must the Irish priesthood be the butt of every godless writer who dips his pen in gall, and of every spouter whose anti-clerical zeal runs away with his sanity? Just this, that we are their superiors in head and heart and chest—they will never forgive us for it. We can do it; therefore, they tell us, we ought. This is the *posse-debere* system of morality invented specially for the priests which any urchin in the street could readily refute. They denounce us for not doing everything we might be able to do; and they hate us heartily if, having made the attempt, we succeed. The devil is notoriously illogical.

While we refuse to take dictation from those whose sincerity is certainly not above suspicion, it is safe to say that you, future priests of Ireland, will in an especial way have the opportunity to lead the people of this country back to the Ireland that was, and up to God—for the road is one. You can do it. But you will not lead effectively; your work will not be a lasting success, unless you make the Irish language

the lever of all your efforts. This is and must ever be the *radex et fundamentum* of all your endeavours.

Don't imagine and don't let anyone persuade you that the language is a matter of indifference, or that anything else can take its place it is of the most vital importance, and no substitute can be found for it. Any of you with a philosophical bent can prove that from psychology, as I have proved it, at any rate to my own satisfaction. You know, as well as I do, that you can go straight to the hearts of the Irish people through the Irish language; furthermore, *cam direach an rod, is bealach mor an t-aithghearra*; and the *aithghearra* in this case is the Irish language. People may talk as they please, but the Irish language does appeal to the Irish heart. Some may throw cold water for the purpose of damping the ardour of over-enthusiastic Gaelic Leaguers or merely for the sake of cussedness—as I used to do—but all will have to admit in secret to themselves that the rich rolling accents of our mother-tongue go straight to some chord within and make it speak.

You, who are in college, have opportunities which many of you will miss hereafter. Don't lose these opportunities; make the most of them; which does not mean, remember, going in for over-doses of Irish. Suppose you fixed as you aim five or even ten years to make you a decent Irish scholar: if you succeeded —and if only you mean business you are bound to succeed—wouldn't that be something? In the meantime you could do as much good work in your particular field here or outside as the best Irish scholar in the land. You would have ever ready to hand the proof of your earnestness, and people would believe you; and a man who is in earnest and on the right lines must, making allowances for accidents, achieve success.

Now is the time, gentlemen, to prepare for the fray. Look then to your armour. A short time, a very short time at most, and you will leave the camp to take your place in the firing line. Go forth, not with a great green flag flapping in the wind with the words Ireland a Nation inscribed upon it—leave that to the main body—but with a tiny stubborn-looking little flag into which you will have woven with threads of burnished gold the motto—*Gan teangaidh gan tir, gan tir gan Dia.* Bring the rising generation up to where you yourselves are, and then push on with them higher and still higher towards the summit and the sunshine. You may not succeed in getting decorated with the Cross of the Legion of Honour; but you will have your reward, and you will not have to wait for it. It will be with you from the beginning, viz., the pleasure of living in the presence of a good diffused, and diffused by yourselves.

A TRIP TO TORY

I WAS not long learning Irish when I realised that the short-cut to a knowledge of the language is to hear it spoken and try to speak it yourself. So I made up my mind that I would go, the following summer, to some Irish-speaking place and try my luck among the natives. The summer came and I resolved to make my way to the least likely place where the influence of Anglicisation would have made itself felt. Accordingly, I started for Tory Island, off the north-west of ancient Tirconnell.

It was a beautiful July afternoon when I mounted my bicycle and was off, over the mountains of Derry, to explore the unknown in dark Donegal. I remember it well. I was that day at peace with the world and in love with nature. It seemed to me that the sun shone for me, the birds sang for me, the fields smiled for me, the heather put on its best blue and purple hue for me; and whether pedalling up a slope or coasting down an incline, in the exuberance of my spirits, I felt like cheering, and almost expected that nature should cheer with me.

My first evening out I arrived in Derrycolumcille for the first time; but as I was travelling *incog.* no civic honours were bestowed upon me. I scandalised some of my friends, who are admirers of Derry, when they asked me afterwards what I thought of the Maiden City. I told them I could see no city there, only lumps of houses scattered through the fields. That is undoubtedly the impression you get when, coming from the south, you reach the brow of the hill over-

looking the Foyle and the city is seen for the first time. I inspected the walls, Roaring Meg, and a few ugly statues; but these things had then no meaning for me. I was practically as ignorant of Irish history as I was when I learned to walk. True, I had some hazy notion that there was a war of some kind round Derry between Protestants and Catholics, but what it was all about I had no definite idea. What nebulous knowledge I possessed was acquired during my school days; not, however, from the teachers, or out of books, but from the scholars. There were Protestants and Catholics at the school I attended, the Catholics being in the great majority; and at times we expressed our views on our country's past in an amicable and very enlightened sort of way. The Protestant lads used to give expression to the political faith that was in them in this doggerel:—

> An orange goose and a purple gander,
> Derry walls and no surrender.

To which we, the Pope's party, promptly replied:—

> Up with the ladder, and down with the rope,
> To—some place or other—with King William, and
> God bless the Pope.

That is all the Irish history I ever learned at school; and of course my case was no worse than that of the rest of the lads throughout the country. I have read a little since and I have no objection at all to the motto: "Derry Walls and no Surrender"; in fact, I believe it should be emblazoned on every banner that floats on the northern air. I have grown to be proud of the 'Prentice boys who closed the gates against the royal coward of the Boyne.

There is a grim irony about the siege of Derry and the battle of the Boyne. The Irish Protestants were

fighting and dying like heroes for a foreign usurper of the throne of England who, it is now generally supposed, was in league with the Pope ; the Catholics were in the field for the representative of England's brutal tyranny and the fiendish Penal Laws. And even yet we have not got sense. But it is evident that a day of better things has already dawned on Erin, and that soon Protestants and Catholics, irrespective of their religious beliefs, will be found side by side for the promotion of everything that makes for the advancement of their common country. "Educate that you may be free" has been a political axiom since the days of Davis. Education will bring with it not merely national freedom but also that freedom which is of far greater importance —the freedom from ignorant, meaningless, unfounded prejudice and distrust amongst those who, whatever some of them may now pretend to believe, are all sons of a common Irish soil. Then Protestants will make their own, as indeed they have, for many reasons, the best right to, the words of "Who Fears to Speak of '98?" and Catholics will appropriate with pride, whatever the intention of the author :—

> Where Foyle his troubled waters rolls northward to the main,
> Here Queen of Erin's daughters, fair Derry, fixed her reign.
> A noble temple crowned her and commerce graced her street,
> A rampart wall was round her, the river at her feet.
> And here she sat alone, boys, and looking from the hill
> Vowed the maiden on her throne, boys, would be a maiden still.

The maiden had no relish for the advances of the Stuart king, for—

> In short, the fact is known, boys, she chased him from the hill,
> For the maiden on her throne, boys, would be a maiden still.

Having spent the night in loneliness in Derry, I was less enthusiastic for cycling the next day. Not

knowing the country, being alone, and anxious to reach my destination as quickly as possible, I made my way to the railway station and boldly demanded: "Falcarragh, third single, please, and a bicycle ticket." I got into a crowded compartment where I found myself beside an amiable old gentleman, a Protestant or Presbyterian minister. We struck up a conversation. My new acquaintance pointed out various places as we went along, and made himself generally agreeable. I was trying to look wise, though I felt like a fish out of water. Imagine my despair, however, when he pointed through the carriage window opposite and exclaimed with enthusiasm: "There is the Grianan." "Yes, indeed," I replied learnedly. "But," he said, "you will see it better when we get round the turn." It was nothing less than the Grianan of Aileach, from which, Cardinal Moran declared, you have the finest view to be had in Europe. But it is not the present view, magnificent though it undoubtedly is, but the historic panorama that Aileach calls forth from out the storied past that makes it only second, if indeed second, to Tara itself. I was born and brought up within forty miles of it, and yet I had never, till this day, even heard of it. To me it only looked like a splendid hill where the school children might assemble on Sunday afternoon to play, "A ring, a ring of rosies, a bottle-full of posies," or, "thread the big needle." But the late and deeply lamented Señor Bulfin summarises its history in a passage in that delightful book, "Rambles in Eirinn": "Aileach itself was known to Ptolemy, and it witnessed the baptism of the chief who knelt to Patrick. It had previously seen the sungod worshipped on its terraces; and on its coronation stone many a gallant prince had received the wand of chieftaincy. It had seen prisoners brought back from Britain

and Gaul, among them being this same Patrick who came in after years to conquer all Ulster and Erin in the name of Christ, and it had seen captive Danes within its walls as it had seen the hostages of Niall. Out of it came the high kings from whose loins sprang Hugh and Shane a' Diomais and Owen. It saw Columba go into exile. It saw the flight of the Earls. It saw the earliest feats of prowess of the Ulster knights, the daring days of the Fiana, and the dark hours when the star of the North went down with the fortunes of the Red Hand. Grey old Aileach! What joy and sorrow, what triumph and defeat, what pride and ignominy, what hope and despair has it known."

Since then I have ascended Aileach hill and feasted my eyes on the gorgeous view one gets from the summit, over the broad fair lands where the O'Donnell, the O'Doherty and the O'Cathain once held sway. But it is with feelings you cannot analyse, emotions the most profound and varied that you sit in silent reverie on the modern walls of the ancient Grianan while you wander in thought over the scenes of the past to which Bulfin refers in the passage quoted. It is with feelings of regret and longing, and pride and sorrow, and joy and despondency, and anger and hatred and love, and faith and hope and confidence, that you sit in silence or wander in meditation by Aileach hill.

There is a legend connected with the Grianan of Aileach also referred to in "Rambles in Eirinn," which one is very much disinclined to disbelieve, as one stands on the summit and lives for a time in the past. The story has it that in the caves underneath the Grianan many knights of ancient Erin stand sleeping by their steeds, and when, at the appointed time, Kathleen Ni Houlahan sounds the bugle call they will leap to their saddles and gallop wildly forth to recover their lost

heritage in Erin. It is only a legend, but one a person is fondly inclined to believe.

The Grianan has a new meaning and innumerable memories for me since that first day I saw it ; thanks, a thousand times, to the Gaelic Revival, for this and more things else than I could now enumerate.

I parted with my friend somewhere along the line and was joined at Letterkenny by another clergyman, this time evidently an Anglican—and he was Anglican in more ways than in religion. We had the compartment to ourselves, so we talked about things in general, and very general, too ; for we were evidently sizing each other up. He must have arrived at a favourable conclusion about me, for after a while he produced a flask and a bottle of soda and asked me kindly if I would have a drop of something. I thanked him, but refused to have any something, and I have to admit that he did not appear to be deeply distressed at my refusal. He then told me he was going to Gweedore for a week's fishing, and I volunteered the information that I was for Tory. " Tory ! " he exclaimed. " Have you had the misfortune to be sent there ? "

" Oh, no," I explained, " I'm going for a holiday."

He gave me a look in which contempt and pity and sympathy and scorn were mingled together. Did I know where I was going ? Did I know anything about the people ? No. He then gave me a repulsive, disgusting account of the Islanders, to which I listened with mortification, and impatience, and suppressed rage. But I managed to keep my stirrups. When he had discharged himself, I remarked in as steady a voice as I could command : " You have been on Tory ? " " No, not likely," he replied.

" Then how can you say these things about the people ? "

"I have heard it," was the answer.

"And you believe it?" I asked.

"Of course I do."

"Well," I said, "I have heard it—just now; and without apologising to you, I believe it to be an unmitigated lie."

The *bodach*, I have no doubt, had been in the habit of repeating the calumnies in congenial company, but he was the victim of an error of judgment in choosing his audience this time. My Irish spirit was awakening, even though late in the day. I was beginning to find my sea-legs in Irish-Ireland waters. It was the first shot I fired on the side of the Irish Revival; but, whatever the results may have been, I have delivered many a broadside since.

That naturally closed the conversation; but the siege was raised at the next stop by the entrance of a number of people, all speaking Irish, it seemed, at the same time. *Och, maise, mo sheacht n-anam oraibh!* I said into myself; or, if I did not know how to say it that way, that is what I felt. All the current of my being set towards them. It was to hear Irish and try to learn it that I left home, and here I was, obviously, in the Gaedhealtact at last. I don't know what I would have given to be able to leap into the middle of the conversation and share it with them, if only to give the Sasanach a bit of a display. As it was, I sat silently in the corner, as proud of these Irish peasants whom I had never seen before as if I owned them all as my own personal property. My friend, the enemy, was probably calculating the amount of dirt and ignorance possessed by each. *Ag 'achan duine a dhoigh fhein.*

We had now left the district where immense boulders squeeze the railway line in from both sides, and were

creeping cautiously through the rushes, the ferns and the heather, till Muckish raised his massive head above us in wild defiance of all the elements. In front was graceful Errigal tapering to the sky, presiding with queenly dignity over mountain and sea. Out on the right was the wide wild expanse of ocean rolling its fathomless mountains of water down direct from the Pole. And there, rising out of the wilderness of waters, was the Island of Tory with the Tor Mor standing guard on the mainland side, in solitary nakedness, the battered remains of a Tor that was when earth was young. The immensity and grandeur of the scene—for Cloghaneely, and we were now in Cloghaneely, is for the lover of nature unquestionably grand—this, and the roll of the Irish in my ears, lifted me out of myself; and as I hung half out of the carriage window intoxicated with delight, I could not help muttering to myself my regret that I had not known this before.

But I was soon to get a rude awakening. The village of Falcarragh, which was my present destination, is the wet-blanket on Irish-speaking Cloghaneely. It is like many another Irish village similarly situated; and it is high time some commonsense was thrashed into them, one and all. One blessed feature about this particular village is that there is little of it. It boasts a police barracks, a post office, a hotel or two; and nearly all the other houses are licensed for the sale of beer, wine and spirits to be consumed on or off the premises. And in this it is only a type. Except with a very few, the Irish language is in no favour here. It is, however, consoling to know that this particular spot presents a marked contrast to the surrounding country—a wide district the most Irish-speaking in Ireland, in the sense that all, old and young, use the language of their

Gaelic forebears as their ordinary everyday speech, and best of all, they are very proud of it.

II

I was compelled to remain at Falcarragh for several days, waiting from hour to hour and from day to day for a boat to come out from Tory Island; but the weather was bad and the sea too rough for a boat to venture across. At last, fortune favoured me. The man who had been superintending the work of the Congested Districts' Board on Arranmore called at the hotel on his way to Burtonport to join the *Granuaile*, the Board's steamer, bound for Tory next morning. A splendid type was this O'Malley, Irish to the core. You would know him at once for a man of the West. He knew no Irish, but was willing to learn; and when I met him a twelvemonth afterwards on Tory, though he had never read a word of Irish in his life, he could speak the language well enough to be understood and could understand it thoroughly. I merely mention this in passing, to point the moral of the advantage, or should I say the necessity, of discarding books and taking to talking.

Asked if he would undertake to get me a passage by the steamer, O'Malley gladly consented, and off we started for Burtonport. I will not stop to describe that railway journey. Suffice it to say that, whereas we should have reached our destination about ten o'clock p.m., we arrived some time near two a.m. Two boatmen from Arran were waiting for us at O'Donnell's hotel to take us to the *Granuaile* at anchor in Arran Roads; and they had been trying to keep each other awake with sups of one thing or another in the meantime.

We started for the steamer; and we were not long out when I gathered from the conversation that our two boatmen were the property of two female consorts who had very decided views on the propriety, or otherwise, of husbands remaining out late on the mainland. A black spot on the water in the distance attracted their attention. In silence they watched it, glancing quickly and frequently over their shoulders. At last one of them exclaimed with a force of language that left nothing to be desired, "It's Madgie and Bessie." On they came, pulling like enraged mermaids over the water in the dull light of the early morning. Our men, as Cæsar would say, were silent, as if they were clearing the decks for action. The women bore down upon us from the south, and as they threatened to cross our bow we were obliged to slacken speed; but this was only a strategical move to compel their dearly beloved to listen to the opinion they had just formed of them. The cannonade burst on us like thunder, and their boat came leaping round the stern of ours, where I was seated in breathless excitement. I did not venture to look round. An oar splashed behind me, and I gathered myself together to receive the blow, for I was convinced, being an unknown stranger, they would make a casualty of me as the cause of the delay. I escaped, however, and as the boats were being pulled vigorously forward along divergent lines, we were soon out of range.

When we got within speaking distance of the *Granuaile* the watch gave us the consoling information that the captain had left orders for no one to get aboard till eight o'clock. Imagine the consternation with which I heard the boatmen declare there was nothing for it but pull to the pier and go ashore for a few hours. The enemy were watching our movements

from a distance, and as we headed for the pier, they started, too, evidently bent on a land engagement. Both parties arrived about the same time, and those two women called up all the reserve force of their fighting vocabulary for one supreme final assault. I retreated, in good order, to a respectful distance to watch the progress of the battle. But it did not last long. Our guns replied feebly for a minute or two, but were speedily silenced for ever. I saw O'Malley speaking to the elder of the women and nodding his head towards me, and I knew he was telling her that it was a priest they had with them. I did not hear the reply, and perhaps it was as well for my own peace of mind: I just caught the words, "*Is cuma liom,*" at the beginning.

When a woman takes to scolding her husband, she is a terror, most likely because she knows his weak points better than anyone else, even himself. The prudent thing to do is to let her fire away till she tires, and then, as a rule, it will be found to be all the time true that, "*I ndheidh na mionna is fearr na mna.*"

When these two replicas of Demosthenes had exhausted themselves, they asked the partners of their joys and sorrows what they were standing there for like amadans, did they want to get their death of cold, and could they not come on to the house? So we set out on the march in single file, I bringing up the rear. We got to a house, and Madgie went to the room door, turned half round, and ordered us to come on out of that and take a taste of this, and the tea would be ready in a minute. I declared in favour of a walk around till the tea would be ready, though indeed I was in no humour for sight-seeing, any more than I was for a taste of this—I just wanted my liberty.

When I returned, Madgie was in the best of temper. telling how anxious she had been for the safety of her beloved, and making him promise not to do it again. Most of this was in Irish. But she became friendly with me, too, and gave me some proof of her proficiency in English. She had been at Lough Derg recently; and complained of the fasting. "And when I got back home," she declared, "with the hunger that was on me, I just put down the pot and put the leg of a hind sheep in it."

At last the time came for us to leave. A small crowd accompanied us to the boat, and as we moved off, hats were waved and aprons flung to the breeze, most prominent amongst them being Madgie's and Bessie's. We got safely aboard the *Granuaile*, weighed anchor, and were off for Tory. After a while I made my way to the captain's side on the bridge. I had had no experience of the sea, except on the boat which plies between Belfast and Bangor during the summer months. Now I found this steamer taking long lounges from side to side, rising on mountains of water as big as Divis and then rushing headlong down, it seemed to me, never to rise again. It is undoubtedly a wild sea in those parts, the worst, I understand, in the transport world. But this day it was perfectly safe. The captain had been eyeing me holding like grim death to the rails, and when I asked, in the simplicity of my seamanship, "Captain, is there any danger," he laughed outright. "Why, man," he said, "you could swim in that." But I did not feel like a dip just then.

We cast anchor in the bay off Tory, and were welcomed by the Island fleet—some seven or eight open boats. We got ashore and my first look at the island from close quarters made anything but a favourable

impression on me. But I did not forget that I had come here for a definite purpose, and I was little interested in anything else. I had come to learn Irish, so I straightway laid siege to a man who happened to be standing apart from the crowd; but at the third sentence I was compelled to capitulate.

A meeting was held and addressed by the Board's representative in English and afterwards by Fr. Cunningham, the curate, in Irish. It was a delicate job to get these Torians to consent to the Board's terms. You understand the Board become nominal landlords of the district where they undertake improvements; and the people of Tory hated landlords as they hated Lucifer —and they had as much right. Tory, you must know, is not an ordinary island: it is an uninhabitable rock. There is nothing even remotely resembling a tree on it; with the exception of a patch or two, there is no cultivation, nor any soil to cultivate. It is said that in the long ago the island was covered with rich deep soil and abundance of vegetation. Now, however, the soil has almost all been cut away for fuel, and Tory is a bare, barren rock. Yet the unfortunate dwellers on this island rock were expected to pay rent, apparently for the right to breathe. When they refused to pay, because they were unable, they were promptly evicted; but as soon as the evictors left, they went back into the hovels that stood for houses. But landlordism would put a stop to that game, and sent the gunboat, the ill-fated *Wasp*, to demolish the mud cabins. By the Providence of Almighty God, I believe, the *Wasp* reached Tory under cover of darkness, struck the rocks and went with all hands to the bottom. Another gunboat, also called the *Wasp*, was sent to avenge the loss of her namesake; rushed on the rocks, sundered, and went down with all hands. That ended landlordism

on Tory, and the islanders were no longer asked to pay rent for the air they breathed. Naturally, they were shy to accept the Board's offer. But Fr. Cunningham, who in addition to being the priest of the island, was policeman and magistrate—in fact, a kind of spiritual and temporal plenipotentiary—managed to persuade most of them. And the people of Tory Island have a right to remember the slavery and self-sacrifice he underwent for them. When I find intolerant and intolerable anti-Irish and anti-Catholic bigots screeching about a priest-ridden people in Ireland, I think of John Cunningham, who, when he might have been swanking in his motor on the mainland, was giving the best years of his manhood to the service of these Tory Islanders for no reward in this world except what poor fare the island could afford, scanty food and scanty clothing. And there are hundreds of John Cunninghams up and down the country.

That afternoon I made the acquaintance of Seumas Mac a' Bhaird, and I do not think I ever met or can hope to meet a finer specimen of Irish manhood. But the author of *Troid Bhaile an Droichid* would require a chapter for himself.

The officials left in the evening; and next morning I began my work, or thought I would. The excitement of the previous day having passed, the Torians turned their attention to me. A priest from Belfast come to learn Irish! That was the limit. The young people, especially, would peep round corners or fly to vantage points to get a look at the human curiosity. I would make an attempt to converse with some one or more, another fellow would come up, spit out, and set his head on one side, as much as to say, I wonder is he right. I had to be careful to display seriousness and sanity in order to convince them that I was not a

fit subject for a lunatic asylum. But after a while they got used to me.

My great chum on Tory was Billy Graine. Billy is undoubtedly the greatest character on the island, propably the greatest in all the country. He is an old man now, but he saw some wild life in his early days ; and if some one would write the exploits of Billy Graine they would be worth reading. They told me the following summer that Billy had influenza during the winter. Some one recommended rum. But at last, they declared, they had to stop giving Billy the rum or he never would have got better. At this time, when I first met him, he had a sore foot and so had all the day to spend with me. We used to sit out in the sunshine, Billy telling me stories and I listening but not understanding a word—and maybe sometimes it was just as well. Some of you may wonder why I spent my time listening though unable to understand ; but those who have tried to get a spoken knowledge of a language, Irish or other, recognise the incalculable advantage of hearing it spoken whether you understand it or not.

I have seen weddings, wakes and funerals on Tory. The wake is of the ordinary type—pipes and tobacco and snuff : but the wedding is rather out of the common. The initial difficulty, and a very formidable one, too, is to find out the relationship between the parties, for naturally the islanders are married and intermarried in all possible directions and combinations. The priest would go to some old cronie for the necessary information. She would seat herself composedly, clasp her hands on her lap, give her body a swing or two, clear her throat, and then begin with Adam and Eve and come down directly, zig-zag, and horizontally till she would arrive at the parties concerned. When the

preliminaries were gone through, the wedding could take place.

I saw many funerals to the graveyard, but I saw another kind of funeral, a thousand times sadder. There are things that cause greater grief than the burial of even those dearest to you. You lay their mortal remains sorrowfully in the grave and you hope their souls are in heaven. But when you see the living flesh and blood of beautiful youth that you love with all the fiery love of your Celtic heart departing slowly from you, probably for ever! Ah, that is what speaks to the over-fraught heart and bids it break. I saw them one morning, boys and girls, the pick of the island, getting into the boat and going off into exile for ever. I don't want to see anything like it again. From the depths of their desolation women wailed the loss of their darlings, and strong men shook with grief, unable to keep back the big tears which freely flowed down their furrowed cheeks. I rushed off to the highest peak beetling over the moaning ocean, and, gazing out across the limitless expanse of sea, I cried like a child. I arose, and, standing bare-headed, with the breeze in my face and the wild sea-gulls for witnesses, I renounced and denounced and condemned to everlasting infamy foreign rule in Ireland with all its works and pomps. It is bad enough to have to go into exile when you can jump on the train and get off, but there is something exceptionally cruel in the slow departure by this Tory boat. It is hard enough to leave all one holds dear on earth when it is done willingly. But when one is forced to go! And practically all our emigrants leave because they cannot live at home. They are condemned to penal servitude from the day of their birth. Is it not penal servitude? Forced to slave for a foreign task-

master in a distant land. And for what purpose? Here is the crowning criminality. To pay the expenses of the revolting debaucheries of foreign landlords who are slowly dying premature deaths from the excess of vice in the cities of England or the Continent as their fancy or lust leads them. That is at any rate one great reason why the Irish race is going steadily into exile. Our oppressors tried to exterminate our race; then, when they failed, they would send us to penal servitude. But the mills of God are grinding.

And yet we are asked to forgive and forget, to let bygones be bygones, and begin in the new. Now, I do not preach hatred, it is but a poor gospel—though hatred of what is vile must surely be virtuous. I do not, however, consider that I am a rebel just yet, when, to those who ask me to forgive and forget, I reply, that there is another motto I prefer for the present to have written large on the standard under which I have elected to fight for the life of a nation—it is: "Let justice be done though the heavens fall."

I did not spend all my time in serious study. I climbed cliffs where the seagull and the puffin screeched execration at me; I discussed philosophy and history with Seumas Ward, quarried stones with Seumas John, and listened to the endless fibs of Billy Graine.

After three weeks I had to leave them. My Irish had not improved much: I started with too little. But did I feel discouraged? Not by any means. I was then at that stage where many beginners give up hope. But I was in a different frame of mind as the boat pushed out from the pier and the natives thronged around sending their copious blessings with me, most prominent amongst them my friend Billy with something like a dew in his eyes. My resolution was that I would learn Irish, and I did.